E JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE

Lilith

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Fall/Winter '83/574

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Unmasking Pornography in Israel

Are Feminists Changing Judaism?

Children of Intermarriage: Raising Them as Jews

The Women's Gallery

Rochelle Rubinstein Kaplan, Tapestry Painter

"It's about the beginning of the world, the strange state of complete chaos before everything was created," says Rochelle Rubinstein Kaplan of her tapestry *Tohu Vavohu* (the chaos that existed before Creation), a hand-stitched painting on silk which she made in 1981. Kaplan, an artist living in Toronto, paints her collages on silks, cottons and wools. She then stuffs and sews her works to add a three-dimensional quality.

Kaplan studied at Yeshiva University in New York, where she designed the first art major there in cooperation with the School of Visual Arts. She is presently doing stage design for dancers and is putting together a show about women and religion in Ireland. Her work has been exhibited in various galleries throughout Toronto.

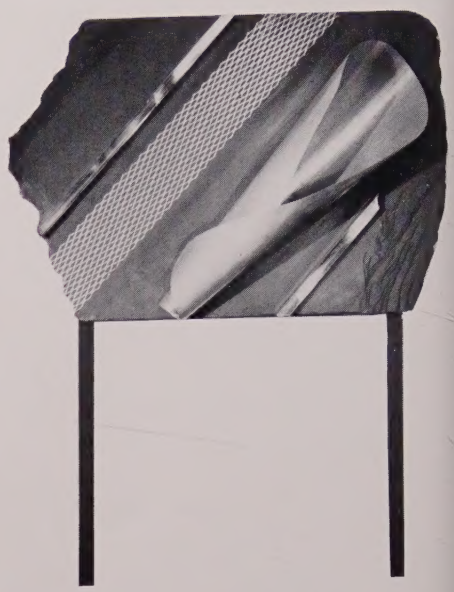
—Karen Denker

Cara Goldberg Marks, Judaica Illustrator

"My purpose in doing art is to create something that people can learn from and then teach from." Cara Goldberg Marks researches her illustrations—*haggadot*, Biblical scenes, "women of valor," *ketubot* (marriage contracts), calligraphic alphabets—by reading *midrashim*, and consulting with rabbis or a local Talmud scholar. "Tradition should take precedence over modernism of thought," Marks asserts. "I'm living in a very modern society. I want my artwork to reflect that, yet not lose its tradition."

Marks studied at Pratt Insitute and Stern College in New York. Her work has been exhibited widely: the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.; the Jewish Museum, New York; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; the Jewish Museum, Athens; the Museum of Ethnography, Tel Aviv. She has completed a book on Hebrew calligraphic technique to be published next year.

—Randy Rosenthal



Naomi Teppich, Sculptor

Naomi Teppich is a New York sculptor and printmaker whose recent wall sculptures have, she says, "a high-tech quality and a feeling of rocks out in the wilderness." Her present work has been influenced by recent trips to the Black Hills of South Dakota and to Greece.

Teppich has experimented with a variety of materials in her sculptures, including metal, slate, and wood. In the past, she has welded, using rods to create what she calls, "nature-related abstract forms." She says, "Some areas of my sculpture are more natural, others are more industrial. My work is a combination."

A part-time instructor at the School of Visual Arts, Teppich was a winner of the 1981-82 Jerome Foundation Emerging Artists award. In the past, her work has been shown at the Pratt-Manhattan Center, the El-Atara Center in Brooklyn, and West Berlin. This past July, her work was exhibited at the Arbitrage Gallery in Soho.

Teppich studied at Pratt Institute and Brooklyn College. She spent a year in Israel studying Art History at the Hebrew University and etching at the Bezalel School. *—K.D.*

The cover

Pornographic images in the Israeli media, imprinting messages of hate and disgust that are hard to excise, deface Israel as they defame and endanger its women.

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Lilith

Fall/Winter '83/5744

THE PREPARED TABLE*

SPECIAL SECTION: Israel at 35

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Porn in the Promised Land

by Judith Bat-Ada

From nudie shoe ads in "family" magazines to exploitive blue movies for kibbutz couples, Israel has moved far from the egalitarian ideals of its founders. The country is now awash in a sea of pornographic images of women. Billboards, magazine layouts—even TV—feature material that degrades, insults and threatens women. A mass-media specialist argues that the rising incidence of pornography contributes significantly to an increase of rape and other violence toward women in Israeli society.

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by Raya Harnick

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An example of Israeli pornography. *—p.9*

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The powerful poetry of Israeli women in the first such collection to appear in English translation, anthologized by Myra Glazer.

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Evaluating a Decade of Jewish Feminism: An interview with Paula Hyman and Arlene Agus

A group of women calling themselves Ezrat Nashim (help for women) set forth the earliest agenda for the nascent Jewish feminist movement in 1972. Now, more than a decade after the group's landmark petition challenging the Conservative movement to expand women's rights, and ten years after the Reform movement ordained its first woman rabbi, two leaders of Ezrat Nashim reveal why it's taking so long to realize the promise of those events.

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Poetry by Marge Piercy

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Raising Kids Jewish in an Intermarriage

Testimonies by Sharon Lieberman, Zahava Jacobson, William Bly, Eileen Berry-Harahan and Inge Lederer Gibel

Advice to grandparents by Helen Latner

By the best estimates, of every three marriages involving a Jew, at least one will be to a non-Jewish partner. While many bemoan this trend, prevention and "cure" seem equally impossible and undesirable in an open society. Five Jews who have married non-Jews tell here how they're raising children with strong Jewish identities even under these complicated circumstances.

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cover mask by Yona Levine,
cover photography by Jay Manis

LILITH welcomes articles, fiction, poetry, biography, drama, children's stories, criticism, photos and original art work. Please include one-sentence biographical identification, address and phone number. Manuscripts must be typed, double spaced, on one side of the page, Complete guidelines are available on request; enclose SASE. For acknowledgement of receipt, please enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard. For return of manuscripts, enclose in SASE-LILITH Publications, Inc., 250 West 57 St., New York, NY 10019.

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*THE PREPARED TABLE *(the Shulchan Aruch)* is the authoritative code of Jewish behavior according to *halacha* (law). As Jewish feminists continue to rediscover and rework Jewish practice, the Contents of *LILITH* may serve as an evolving Prepared Table for a new code of behavior.

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam. After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, He created a woman, also from the earth, and called her "Lilith." Adam said, "You are fit to be below me and I above you." Lilith said, "We are equal because we both come from the earth." (FROM *THE ALPHABET OF BEN SIRA, 23A-B)*

From the Editors

In these early autumnal days of evaluation which precede the High Holy Days—or "Days of Awe"—LILITH's editors have been performing our customary soul-searching about the direction of the magazine, and its relation to the lives of its readers.

With "networking" the word of the hour, the LILITH office continues to be seen as the repository of all information on all subjects that might possibly interest a Jewish woman. Some samples from recent calls: A woman planning a marriage wants a woman rabbi. A woman in mourning wants to know about congregations in her area where she'll be welcome to say the *kaddish* prayer. The editor of *Kolenoe*, the Dutch Jewish women's magazine, wants to connect with Jewish feminists in cities across America. A program which brings non-Jewish women leaders to Israel wants suggestions for participants in future seminars. To fight the virulent anti-choice campaign in Canada against pioneer pro-choice gynecologist Dr. Henry Morgentaler, a woman wants to know what Jewish or interreligious groups can help them combat a right-wing religious coalition. We tell you all this because the magazine, while not a movement in itself, is probably the closest thing to being the headquarters for a wide range of Jewish feminist concerns.

LILITH continues to grow, acquiring new bookstore outlets, new advertisers and new subscribers. At the same time, LILITH's Networking Newsletter has found many new readers.

Much of the necessary word-of-mouth that leads to this growth comes from you, our readers, who communicate not only with this office but also with your friends and colleagues. This is a call to all of you to keep talking and writing! The magazine continues to need up-to-date information on your activities, works in progress, academic papers and lectures, Jewish women's groups, conferences and events of note. If any of you are interested in writing to friends on behalf of the magazine, we'll be happy to supply you with LILITH flyers, sample letters, and lots of enthusiasm and gratitude. Thanks to the help of many supporters around the country who wrote to scores of women and men, introducing them to the magazine and asking them to send tax-deductible contributions, to subscribe for themselves and their mothers and daughters, the challenge grant we received from the Emet Foundation was matched last spring.

While the year here has been one of growth, for women in Israel, and for all Israelis, it has not been an easy one.

Israel marks its 35th year amid an increasingly vocal internal struggle over the direction the society should take. The status of women cannot be separated from the country's continued war footing; it will be substantially affected by the eventual outcome of this debate, as the pieces in our special section on Israel-at-35 demonstrate.

The burgeoning of pornography in Israel, which Dr. Judith Bat-Ada's article exposes in an exclusive to LILITH, should be read in the context of a society which glorifies manhood and "manliness," fearing that to do less could mean losing the next war. These fears, and their effects on women, constituted the subject of the talk by Dr. Joyce Rosman Brenner, which we include. The isolation many Israeli women feel comes through in their writing, as Sharon Weinstein notes in her review of the poetry anthology, *Burning Air and a Clear Mind*. In the fourth piece, Raya Harnick excoriates the Israeli government and the society's values for causing her son's death in the war in Lebanon.

Whatever the results of the changing political realities in Israel, and of feminists' struggles in North America, we want to wish all of our readers a Shanah Tovah Umetukah—a good and sweet year—with success in our joint endeavor to help create an egalitarian Jewish community.

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The next issue of LILITH, #12, will be a Special Literary Issue. Submissions of fiction, poetry and literary essays (e.g., book and film reviews, descriptive pieces) are invited. All must be accompanied by author's address, phone & SASE. Send to: Managing Editor, Literary Issue, LILITH, 250 W. 57 St., NYC 10019.

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Linda Swirsky
Micha Taubman
Ruth Warshauer
Bertha L. Wechsler
Dorothy Weinstein

Lines of Communication

Aiding the Elderly

Dear LILITH:

Paula Gantz gave a moving portrait of the difficulties of being old and female in "Our Golden Years" [LILITH #10]. JASA (Jewish Association for Services for the Aged) provides a number of services—in addition to those she mentioned—to help relieve that burden.

Twenty-one JASA senior citizens centers in New York City and on Long Island provide kosher hot lunches and a range of social, recreational, educational and cultural activities. Twenty-one JASA social service offices assist older adults—mostly women—with government entitlements, personal problems, home care, and health-care counseling. JASA also maintains several Meals-on-Wheels programs; a home attendant program; services for recent Soviet Jewish immigrants; a recreation program serving 40 senior clubs (many located in synagogues); and a public affairs program.

JASA manages five (not two) apartment complexes for the elderly—housing more than 2,000 older tenants. Next year, JASA will construct a sixth building, at Cooper Square in Manhattan; names are now being accepted for the mailing list for applications.

To meet the needs of a more highly educated older population, we recently organized "Sundays at JASA," a series of classes, lectures, and concerts geared to the needs and interests of older adults; a new series begins in October.

As required by the government agencies that fund many of our programs, we keep careful statistics, from which we know that each year we serve more than 50,000 older adults and their families—20 percent of the 225,000 Jewish elderly in metropolitan New York.

In 1982, JASA received $1.64 million from Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Greater New York, which in addition sponsored many other programs for the elderly in the metropolitan area: several geriatric facilities, senior citizen camps, family social services, and senior clubs at local YM-YWHA's and Jewish community centers.

Ann Wolfe's claim that the community does not have an extensive outreach program is unfounded. Both JASA and Federation place information regularly in the local and Jewish press, and in the city-wide media, and make it available regularly to all synagogues; adult Jewish organizations; senior citizens' service centers and organizations; city officials; and police precincts.

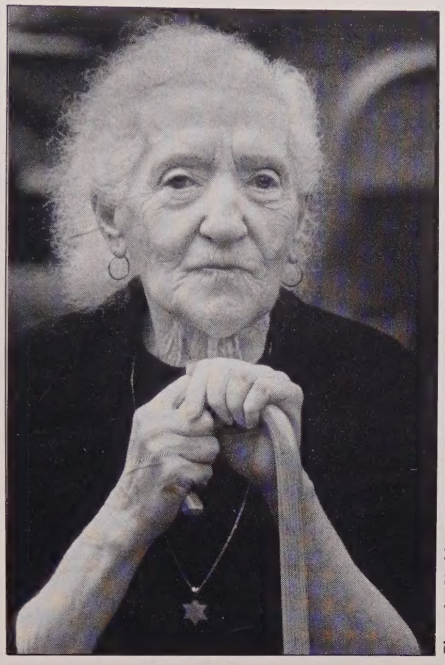

Photo by Kathleen Eckles

It is undoubtedly true that more needs to be done. As the number and proportion of elderly increase in the coming years, Americans will have to pay greater attention to their needs—with more nursing homes, more home care, more senior centers, more funds. After all, "their" needs will someday be our own.

Miriam Koren
JASA
New York NY

Dear LILITH:

I am a lawyer who has specialized in the legal problems of the elderly for many years. Your timely article on older women neglected the central role legal issues often play in the lives of the elderly.

Low-income elderly people are dependent for their very subsistence upon a complex set of inter-related public benefits. The article reflected a common problem of misinformation about the laws governing them. A distinction must be drawn between SSI, which provides a minimum income for poor elderly, disabled and blind people; and Medicaid, which pays medical providers to service eligible persons. At this time, $1,500 is the *resource* limit for one person for eligibility for the Federal Supplemental Security Income Program, not Medicaid. In New York State, at this time, the *resource* limit for Medicaid is $2,600 for a household of one person, and $4,050 for a household of two. There is also a burial fund of $1,500 allowable per person, and another $1,500 for the spouse.

Income levels for both SSI and Medicaid vary from state to state. In New York at this time, the Medicaid *income* level for one person is $370 and for two $529. SSI income levels are respectively $367.51 and $525.88. Elderly recipients may "spend down" their "surplus income" and obtain Medicaid coverage, if they are resource-eligible. This option is not applicable to the SSI Program.

Hilary J. Sohmer
Legal Services for the Elderly in Queens
Rego Park NY

New Get

Dear LILITH:

Your article on the plight of those unable to obtain a *get* when a spouse refuses to cooperate was extremely interesting and informative [*Kol Ishah*, #10]. However, it failed to mention the Bet Din that was established by the Reconstructionis Rabbinical Association in January 1980. A woman may now come before the rabbi for the divorce. The three-member rabbinical court has since performed many Jewish divorces in a solemn ceremony that lasts approximately 20 minutes.

Marcia Gitomer
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Wyncote PA

See this issue's Tsena—Rena columns for an update on the situation of Jewish women seeking religious divorces—Eds.

Guilt by Association

Dear LILITH:

I must admit to being more than a little troubled by Annette Daum's article on "The Jewish Stake in Abortion Rights" [LILITH #8]. What disturbs me is the approach introducing the topic, which lumps together "the Catholic hierarchy" in "unholy alliance" with every far right and anti-Semitic group from the Liberty Lobby to the American Nazi Party.

The article is admittedly a clever one, if ominous in its probable impact. The alleged linkages between Catholics and extremists are established by insinuation and innuendo rather than direct affirmation. But its basic message, unless my "Catholic paranoia" is getting the best of me, seems clear enough: there is a terrible conspiracy against Jews and all decent values going on in this country and "the Catholic hierarchy" is a key actor in it. The conspiracy motif is

Lines of Communication

even buttressed with a striking chart of the "interlocking directorates" engaged in the "crusade."

The terminology here is invidious, playing as it does on deep fears within the Jewish community, and resulting in a serious misrepresentation of the role of the Catholic community within American society. The Bishops' Conference has *not* taken positions which are anti-labor, anti-ERA anti-civil rights, etc. It is *not* a part of the "Moral Majority" or any other right-wing group, despite a similarity of views on one or two specific issues.

What is needed in the abortion debate is clarification of the issues and actual positions of both the Catholic and Jewish communities in dialogue with each other. What we have in this article, sadly, reads more like the first installment of a new version of an old book: "The Protocols on the Hierarchs of Roman Catholicism."

Eugene J. Fisher
Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Wahington DC

Dear **LILITH:**

I was enormously moved by the report on "Copenhagen: One Year Later" (issue #8) It added enormously to the value of a chapter in my forthcoming book on *The Female World From a Global Perspective*. I am also exploring ways of dealing with the kind of behavior that took place at that Conference. In the meanwhile, best wishes for the success of your important journal.

Jessie Bernard
Washington DC

Lilith in Class

Dear **LILITH:**

I have just completed a syllabus for a Women's Studies course I am teaching. I was amazed in retrospect at the obvious: I couldn't have planned the class as effectively without LILITH. I write to say thank you and to encourage you to put some of the articles together as a volume. They are wonderful.

Riv-Ellen Prell
Department of Anthropology
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis MN

Dear **LILITH:**

Keep up the good work! Rural Jewish women like myself really appreciate the input, contact and stimulation of a feminist-oriented Jewish magazine. Perhaps one day you could run an article on Jewish women who live in rural, non-Jewish areas.

Janet Tatz
Boulder MT

Illustration by Mary Lou Schempf

Dear **LILITH:**

On behalf of Mrs. Marilyn Dunn's 4th Grade Class of Temple Beth El Religious School, we would like to make a donation to your organization from our Keren Ami Fund. We hope that this will help you continue to do the important work you are doing.

Carolyn Aibel, Mark Bloom, Melinda Bob, Robyn Cort, Debra Ehrenberg, Brad B. Engel, Michael Fehder, Melissa Geschwind, Alicia Glickman, Jill Portugal, Scott Rosenblaum, David Schreiber, Natalie Triefler
Closter NJ

Know The Enemy

Dear **LILITH:**

A national network TV morning show features an interesting and heartwarming story from Japan.... A would-be journalist and/or novelist (male) is in need of a means of livelihood and starts a bagel business. His young Japanese wife is quoted as thinking him "crazy" but remains nonetheless at his side faithfully each early a.m. to help him before going off to her regular job.

The man then says, "My Mom says you wouldn't find a Jewish Princess to do this." The Prince has spoken.

It can be presumed that this human interest piece has been edited, but the master media moguls have clearly chosen to retain this telling commentary.

Why am I sharing this with you? Who else would better understand my sadness and frustration at this manifestation of ignorance? Thanks for your ears, eyes, and hearts.

Miriam Jaffe
San Francisco CA

Dear **LILITH:**

When my husband saw your ad he thought he would surprise me with a subscription to your magazine. However when I received your gift card in advance of the magazine I already knew that I couldn't quite enjoy your views. First and foremost I am *Mrs.* Charles J. Cohl—a title that I have enjoyed for almost 35 years with no difficulty—I resent being called *Ms.*

Your magazine [#10] finally arrived this past Friday and really spoiled my Shabbos just looking at the cover and the contents—why do you call it a Jewish women's magazine? From what little I glanced at you seem to want to be Jewish men.

As for sexism in the schools, it is really a breath of fresh air to see young girls attending school dressed modestly and properly rather than trying to look like boys and wearing tight jeans. I also find the way most women dress to be obnoxious. What if for the sake of true equality men started to dress like women?

Regarding women's place in the synagogue I find that I always *kvell* when my *kohanim* husband or sons get an *aliyah* after all there are so many things that I can do that they can't.

As for your article [on Jewish lesbians], I never saw a Jewish Lesbian/ I hope I never see one/ But if I ever see one (G-d forbid)/I would rather see than be one

You are all obviously intelligent young women—too bad your talents could not be used to further the beauty of a truly observant home. So sorry that most of you are having trouble finding yourselves.

Estelle G. Cohl
Upper Grandview NY

LILITH welcomes letters to the editor from readers, both to share views on articles printed and to share experiences and information. Letters must include name and address but either or both of these can be omitted.

Kol Ishah

Naamat/Pioneer Women blanketed Israel with this ad, a shekel note imprinted with the words, "A woman gets only 70 agorot for every shekel (100 agorot) paid a man" as part of their campaign against pay and promotion discrimination.

Kol Ishah—"Woman's Voice." Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

Anti-Semitism A Hot Issue at Women's Studies Meet

Anti-Semitism within the American women's movement and worldwide was a major concern of this year's National Women's Studies Association Conference, held June 26-30, 1983 in Columbus, OH.

The conference's pathbreaking plenary session on "Racism and Anti-Semitism in the Women's Movement", held Tuesday, June 27th and attended by some 1,500 people, reflected the growing recognition within the NWSA that anti-Semitism is a serious issue, to be included with racism as a major form of oppression.

Stressing the need to expose anti-Semitism as "an invisible and insidious oppression in American society" was Evelyn Torton Beck, teacher of women's studies courses and comparative literature at the University of Wisconsin and editor of *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* (see excerpt and author interview, *LILITH* #10). In a paper entitled, "No More Masks: Anti-Semitism as Jew-Hating," Beck discussed her sense of vulnerability as a Jew in American society.

She said that "Jew-hating" manifests itself in many ways, the most obvious of which are extermination, forced assimilation and the persistence of anti-Jewish stereotypes (including the "Jewish Mother" and "Jewish American Princess") in speech, print, jokes and *grafitti*. More subtle forms of anti-Semitism include, according to Beck: the definition of Zionism only as the worst kind of fanaticism and unchecked expansionism rather than the belief in Israel's right to exist; use of the Holocaust as the measure of all oppression (i.e. anything less is not considered oppressive); discomfort with the idea of separate "Jewish interests"; "anti-Semitism by omission," such as the exclusion of material on Jewish women in women's studies courses and curricula; and use of the "double standard", i.e. the argument that, because some Jews have achieved prominent positions in American society, they are not oppressed.

Beck also discussed strategies for combatting anti-Semitism, primarily through education of the American public regarding Jews and Judaism. While she acknowledged that all oppressions are inter-linked, and that one cannot oppose anti-Semitism without also opposing racism and homophobia, she stressed that "anti-Semitism is different from racism, and must be studied in its specificity."

The plenary, moderated by Clare Bright, included presentations on "Unveiling the Hidden Face of Racism: The Plight of Arab-Americans," by Azizah al-Hibri, Editor, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy;* "Identity: Skin Blood Heart," by Minnie Bruce Pratt, Editor, *Feminary Magazine;* "Racism from Imperialist to Industrialist: Power, Profit and Product," by Carol Lee Sanchez, San Francisco State University; and "A Rock and a Hard Place: Relationships Between Black and Jewish Women," by Barbara Smith, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Beck's emphasis on the need for a broader and more accurate definition of Zionism was reiterated at a later session on Arab women which, Beck reported, established a "good dialogue" between Jewish and Arab women. Among the other issues discussed at the session were the need to oppose anti-Arab stereotypes; difficulties faced by Arab women in the U.S., some of whom are uneducated and abused by their husbands; plight of Palestinian women prisoners; and networking between Arab and other women.

Following the "Racism and Anti-Semitism" plenary, some 50 women met to establish a Task Force on Jewish Issues which intends to form a NWSA Jewish Women's Caucus (one of many caucuses representing minority and other special-interest groups within the Coordinating Council, the NWSA's major decision-making body). The Caucus will continue the ongoing discussion of anti-Semitism, and will work to incorporate material on Jewish women in women's studies courses across the country, and in the programs of future conferences.

This year's conference, characterized by Beck as the "most successful" yet in terms of its large number of academic panels and cultural events on Jewish women, included sessions on: "A Weave of Broner: Jew, Feminist, and Writer"; "Jewish Women's History: Reclaiming the Invisible American Woman"; "Jewish Women, Anti-Semitism and Feminist Education"; Women and Suffrage" (including a paper by Linda Gordon Kuzmack, of George Washington University, on The Jewish League for Woman Suffrage in England), "Transforming Tradition: Feminism and Judaism"; and "The Immigrant Jewish Woman Writer."

Those interested in more information on the NWSA Jewish Women's Caucus should contact:

Judith Arcana
(one of the four
Caucus Coordinators)
564 Roscoe
Chicago, IL 60657

—Reena Sigman Friedman

Kol Ishah

Conservative Rabbis' Group Turns Away Woman

Delegates to the 83rd annual convention of the Rabbinical Assembly, the international organization of Conservative rabbis, meeting in Dallas, TX this April, rejected by a narrow margin the admisson of that body's first woman member.

The final tally of the standing roll-call vote last April 12th, which observers described as "dramatic and moving," was 210 in favor and 75 against accepting the application of Rabbi Beverly Magidson, ordained by the New York school of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform) in 1979 and serving as interim chaplain at the Jewish Hospital of St. Louis, MO. A 75% majority—214 votes—is required to admit new RA members graduating from institutions other than the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Conservative movement's main academic institution. Supporters of the admission of women into the Conservative rabbinate requested the roll call (and the presence of all Convention delegates) after a first vote of 206 for and 72 against signalled overwhelming support for Conservative women rabbis at the convention.

According to Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Executive Director of the RA, non-JTS rabbis, some 500 of whom have been admitted to the RA in the past 40 years, submit applications (including evidence of ordination, and two years' work in Jewish institutions) to the RA membership committee, which passes them along to the RA Executive Council for approval. The names are then circulated among the entire RA membership (currently 1,150) and finally placed before the convention. While Magidson and six male rabbis passed the earlier stages of the admission process, only she failed to receive the required 75% vote.

Magidson sought admission to the JTS Rabbinical School in September 1972, but was turned down after a faculty vote in February 1973. Following her graduation from HUC-JIR, she served as chaplain at Vassar College, rabbinic intern at the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the association of American Reform synagogues) and, for two years, as associate director of the Hillel Foundation at Washington University in St. Louis. This July, she was hired as rabbi of Beth Shalom of Clifton Park, NY, a Conservative synagogue.

"This was such a close vote that it would be a shame not to try again," Magidson told the Philadelphia *Jewish Exponent* after the convention. Rabbi Michael Monson of Philadelphia, Executive Director of the Jewish Association for College Youth, who sponsored Magidson's application to the RA, asserted that "without doubt," the issue would be raised at next year's convention.

Many observers predicted that, prior to that convention, efforts will be made to reduce the percentage rate for admitting new members from 3/4, as currently stipulated by the RA constitution, to 2/3, and to permit member rabbis not attending the convention to mail in their votes, both of which may increase Magidson's chances for acceptance.

LATE BULLETIN

Oct. 24—The Jewish Theological Seminary Faculty Senate voted 34-8 to ordain women as rabbis. It will accept female rabbinical students beginning with the 1984-85 school year.

The 12 women ordained as Reform rabbis, and the two graduated as Reconstructionist rabbis, last spring, bring to 75 the total number of American women ordained as Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis since 1972, according to an annual Jewish Telegraphic Agency survey.

The women named Reform rabbis in Cincinnati were: Susan Ellen Berman of Brooklyn; Ilene Melamed of St. Paul, Minn.; Randi Musnitsky of Penn Valley, Pa.; and Jill Colman Ruskin, of Southfield, Mich.

Those ordained Reform rabbis in New York were: Shira Stern of New York City; Jacqueline Koch Ellison of New York City; Leslie Jean Alexander of Berkeley, CA.; Sandy Ellen Bogin, of Torrance, CA.; Elyse Goldstein of Scranton, Pa.; Carole Lee Meyers of Washington, D.C.; Marjorie Sue Yudkin of St. Paul, Minn.; and Susan Leslie Einbinder of Ridgewood, NJ.

The two women ordained as Reconstructionist rabbis were: Deborah Bartnoff of Englewood, NJ.; and Cynthia Kravitz of Philadelphia. —**R.S.F.**

Obituary

Clara Lemlich Shavelson (July 25, 1982), age 96. Labor leader, and political activist, Shavelson is best remembered for her role in touching off the historic 1909 shirtwaist makers' strike, known as the "Revolt of the 20,000."

At a now-famous meeting at New York's Cooper Union on November 22, 1909, Shavelson, then a young woman of 20, declared in Yiddish, "I have listened to all the speakers, and I have no further patience for talk. I am one who feels and suffers for the things pictured. I move that we go on a general strike!"

By the end of that long, hard winter, the strikers, most of whom were young, unmarried Jewish women, had achieved a closed shop, 52-hour week, substantial pay raise and abolition of many abuses. In the process, they proved that women could organize and strike successfully, and spurred dramatic increases in union membership throughout the industry.

Born in Gorodok, on the Austrian border of the Ukraine, Shavelson rebelled against her Orthodox father, a grocer, by reading Russian novels and revolutionary tracts. On immigrating to the U.S., she intended to study medicine, but instead entered a garment shop, and two years after her arrival, was among the founders of the influential I.L.G.W.U. waistmakers' Local 25.

Following the 1909 strike, Shavelson, along with other strike leaders, was blacklisted within the industry and could only work temporarily, under assumed names. In 1909, she became a factory inspector for the union and, around the same time, was elected to the executive board of the Women's Trade Union League, and began speaking out on behalf of women's suffrage, particularly among working women.

As a Brooklyn housewife, she organized a strike to protest a rent increase which led to the family's eviction from their home, and helped organize the United Council of Working Class Women, (later known as the Progressive Women's Council), a housewives' community organization that fought for just prices and rents, and also provided food and picket line support for strikers. In the early 1930's, the Progressive Women's Council (of which Shavelson later became president) spearheaded successful bread and meat strikes.

In 1934, she attended the first International Women's Congress Against War and Fascism in Paris, and, in the early 1940's, became New York City secretary of the International Workers Order Women's Division. In 1944, she returned to the shops as a hand-finisher on cloaks and active union member, until her retirement nine years later.

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Rabbi Dr. Joseph I. Singer *Rabbi Solomon B. Shapiro*

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Kol Ishah

State Court Rules On Jewish Divorce

A landmark ruling by New York State's highest court last February 15, 1983, providing for the civil court's enforcement of a couple's pre-nuptial agreement included in their *ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract), may help alleviate the plight of individuals seeking to obtain a *get* (Jewish divorce) from recalcitrant spouses.

Plaintiff Susan Roe Avitzur of Albany sued for breach of the terms of her Conservative *ketubah* by her civilly divorced husband, Boaz. A pre-nuptial agreement in the couple's standard Rabbinical Assembly *ketubah*, in use since 1954, provides for the summoning of husband or wife, at the other spouse's request, before the Conservative *Bet Din* (Jewish court) of the RA and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, as a means of resolving marital disputes, including the granting of a *get*. This function of the *Bet Din* is intended to "enable the party so requesting to live in accordance with the standards of the Jewish law of marriage through his or her lifetime," and the court has the power to require compensation for non-compliance.

Boaz refused to appear before the *Bet Din* and failed to grant Susan a *get*. Without the *get*, Susan, and many other women in similar situations, are known as *agunot* (anchored women) and are not free to remarry under Jewish law. The children of such remarriages are considered illegitimate. Since, under Jewish law, only a man has the power to grant a divorce, many women are left helpless, subject to financial and/or emotional extortion by their former husbands. (See Bracha Osofsky, "Progress on the *Get* Problem," *Lilith* #10).

The 4-3 decision by the New York State Court of Appeals reversed an Appellate Division ruling which stated that the *ketubah*, as a religious document, could not be enforced by the civil courts. Yet, Judge Sol Wachtler, in his majority opinion in the Appeals Court case, stated that the decision was based on "neutral principles of contract law, without reference to any religious principle," and that "we find nothing in law or public policy to prevent judicial recognition and enforcement of the secular terms of such an agreement." In his dissenting opinion, Judge Hugh Jones wrote that such a step would violate "the constitutional prohibition against entanglement of our secular courts in matters of religious and ecclesiastical content." (The case was returned to the New York Supreme Court for implementation.) The Appeals Court decision in the Avitzur case, in establishing the principle that a religious document is enforceable as a civil contract, paves the way for civil enforcement of other religious prenuptial or separation agreements. —R.S.F.

Mazel Tov

In the Community

Sala Galant Burton, elected in June to the San Francisco Congressional seat left vacant by the death of her husband, Representative Philip Burton, raising the number of Jewish women Representatives to three. The others are Barbie Boxer, another San Francisco Democrat, and Bobbie Fiedler, a Republican from Los Angeles. There are a total of 31 Jews in the House, and eight in the Senate.

Gail Beitman, named executive director of the Jewish Federation of Cumberland County, NJ.

Ruth Fein, president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston and the first woman president of the American Jewish Historical Society, re-elected the Society's president this June.

Blu Greenberg of New York City, author and lecturer, elected president of the JWB Book Council.

Marsha Grossman of New Jersey assumed the presidency of the Federation of Jewish Agencies in Atlantic County in June.

Dr. Evelyn E. Handler, named president of Brandeis University.

Ferne Katleman, director of continuing professional education of the Council of Jewish Federations, has assumed the office of president-elect of the Conference of Jewish Communal Service.

Bette Kraut of New York, elected the first woman president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Schenectady, NY.

Pearl Newmark, appointed senior editor of the *Phoenix Jewish News* and **Leni Reiss**, manager, according to publisher **Flo Eckstein**, who has assumed the additional title of executive editor.

Sheila Levin of New York, named assistant executive director of the American Jewish Congress.

Jacqueline Levine of West Orange, NJ, a member of the board of the Council of Jewish Federations, elected chairperson of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), the first woman to hold the post.

Charlene Loup, formerly the general campaign chairperson of Denver's Allied Jewish Federation, elected the first woman president of the Federation last June.

Rabbi Ilene Schneider, named director of Jewish education of the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Atlantic County, NJ.

Sharon Tenhouse of Toronto, elected president of Maccabi Canada in July.

Peggy Tishman, elected president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York City.

Awards

Cynthia Ozick, noted novelist, was one of the two authors to receive a Mildred and Harold Strauss Living award of $35,000 a year tax-free for a minimum of five years. Nominations for the award, among the largest available to writers, were made by members of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and the winners were chosen by an Academy-Institute writers' jury composed of Elizabeth Hardwick, Donald Barthelme, Irving Howe and Philip Roth. Ozick's *magnum opus* on equal rights for Jewish women ("Notes Toward Finding the Right Question") appeared in LILITH #6.

Elaine Mann, director of Judaic Studies and Israel Programs at New York's Jewish Community Center of Washington Heights, received the first "Center Professional of the Year" award of the Association of Jewish Center Workers.

Dale Miller, a student at the Boston University School of Public Communications, received the 1982 JDC/Smoler Student Journalism Award for her series of articles that appeared in the Boston Jewish student newspaper, *Genesis*.

Janet Blatter of Montreal, author, with Sybil Milton, of *Art of the Holocaust*, was among this year's winners of the National Jewish Book Awards presented by the Jewish Book Council.

Marjorie Blankstein of Winnipeg, past president of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress for the Manitoba-Saskatchewan region and president of the Jewish Community Council of Winnipeg, was one of four Canadian Jews (among 63 honorees) awarded the Order of Canada.

PORN in the Promised Land

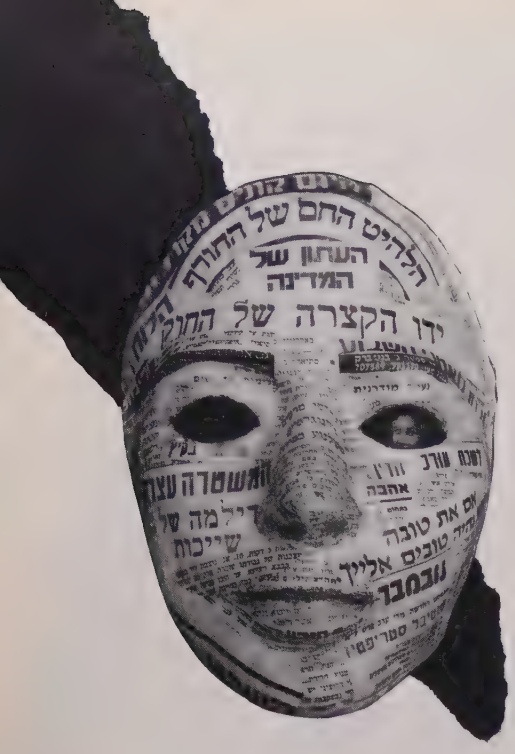
by Judith Bat-Ada

Suppose that in one year anti-Semitic violence in the U.S. rose by 45%, and a Jew was brutally mutilated. Suppose, too, that year there had been a 300% increase in the sale of anti-Semitic magazines and videotapes. Surely, American Jews would demand an investigation of the connection between these two phenomena.

In Israel, there has been an acceleration of certain types of crimes in the past few years. During this same period, there has been a drastic increase in the dissemination of printed and visual materials glorifying certain kinds of violence.

The crimes have been assaults on girls and women. The materials are pornography. And Israeli women are beginning to speak up on the connection.

While this article is not about pornography per se, but about its proliferation in and effect on Israeli life, we should take just a sentence or two to provide a working definition: pornography means the display of people as sexual objects rather than as total, complex human beings with complex histories, presents and futures, and the reduction of such persons to easily replaceable body parts (breasts, thighs, vaginas, legs, etc.).



Dr. John H. Court, Associate Professor of Psychology at The Flinders University of South Australia, in his paper on pornography presented to the International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women (Haifa, 1981), concluded that the themes of pornography channel and direct violence to women and children. These themes include pleasure in pain, rape as rewarding, and sex as a mechanistic event which one is entitled to witness. He writes:

"An extended case, starting in 1970, has been made on the basis of very dubious data from Denmark, that sex crimes go down when pornography becomes freely available .... I remain ... convinced [on the basis of various studies] that sexual assaults are not only increasing, but that this increase is in part influenced by the themes promoted by pornography." While minor sex crime reports declined in Copenhagen, rape did not. Dr. Court writes: "In fact, the trend has been steeply up." He quotes British feminist Diana Russell:

"The point about the relationship between pornography and rape is this: pornography, even at its most banal, objectifies women's bodies .... Women are not seen as human beings, but as things. Men are reared to view females in this way, pornography ... feeds it, and rape is one of the consequences."

Israeli police statistics reveal a 45% increase in rape in Israel from 1980-1981, and a 10% increase in other sex crimes. The increase in rape cannot be explained away by the standard "more reporting" argument. Dr. Court believes this argument is "overstated by those who wish to deny the association with pornography." Even if public awareness led to increased reporting of assaults, "it cannot explain rises prior to such public awareness occurring," he said. In fact, some research suggests that fewer rapes are reported in Israel today (in the U.S., as well) than in past years because of: (1) the emergence of non-reporting rape crisis centers; (2) publicity regarding the sometimes serious difficulties imposed upon the victims of rape by the authorities; (3) the well-justified fear of retaliation from the rapists' friends or the rapists themselves when they are inevitably released from custody; and (4) the realization that often no conviction will be obtained.

Shlomo Gal, chief of the Jerusalem police force, in a 1981 interview with Esther Stein of the Institute for the Study of Media and the Family, said police estimate that only 1 out of 20 rapes is reported. And this estimate does not take into account increased incest and marital rape, about which there are neither statistics nor estimates. While our numbers of reported rapes (142 in 1980, 277 in 1981) are low compared to the U.S. (the F.B.I. estimated, *Newsweek* reported, that U.S. rapes occur at one per six minutes), our sudden increase is what is significant.

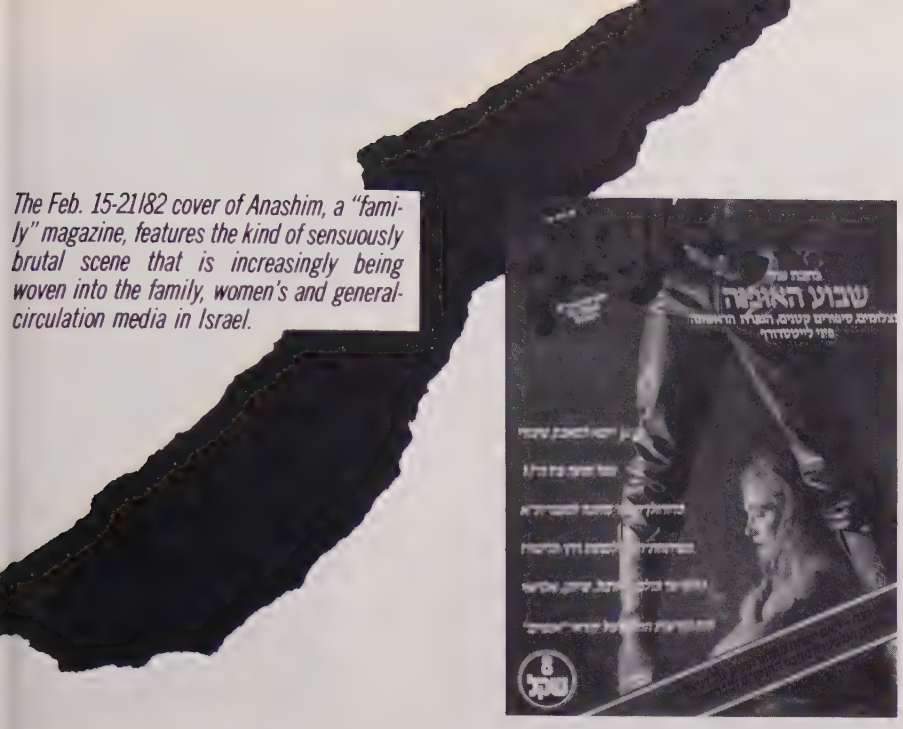
Moreover, the rape crisis center in Tel Aviv informs us, victims are getting younger (as in the U.S.). For the first time, parents are calling in about attacks upon children as young as five years of age. There was an outbreak of rape of children from five to 16 after the brutal sexual assault and chain-saw mutilation of 11-year old Nava Elimelech of Bat Yam in March, 1982; her severed head and parts of her body were found along the Tel Aviv beach. *Bull* Magazine, in an article on Nava after she was originally kidnapped, described her as a sexually swinging 12-year-old who engaged in sexual acts at parties with all the boys and left for a sexual encounter the night of her disappearance, wearing sexy underwear. (Parenthetically, I deliberately use the term "girls" when speaking of young females "under the age of consent"—i.e., up to 18. I do this out of a strong ideological conviction that the word implies a level of social and legal protection adult society owes any youth below the age of 18. Those who delight in the ultimate in female exploitation, that is, the purveyors of child porn, are happy to call girls of 10 or 15 "females," "women" or "young women." This permits their exploitation of *children*—redefined as women—with "clear conscience.")

Sexual child abuse is by no means a new phenomenon in Israel. We have had child molestation before and child rape before, but such cases were so few and far between that no statistics of child rape existed previously. Such an overwhelming incidence of rape of children is new.

Israel has thus seen real changes in its male behavior towards women —and children—in a very short period of time. Our research supports the mounting accumulation of feminist and scientific opinion that an anti-women propaganda blitz over the past several years has caused and/or encouraged increased women and child abuse. Much of that blitz appears in forms of pornography.

Dr. Court has pointed out that a larger danger than pornography itself may be that its themes filter down into "legitimate" mass media and general society. The effect of these pornographic themes is to increase the level and style of violence such as rape, wife battering, incest and general abuse. These crimes appear to be incorporating the newer forms of abuse and humiliation depicted in pornographic materials.

My interviews with battered wives substantiate statements on this phenomenon by Barbara Swirski of the Battered Women's Shelter in Haifa. Battering husbands (as well as emotionally and verbally abusive men), she said, commonly use pornographic photos and ideas to focus the sexual activity they force their wives into. These photos and "imaginative" ideas include the wives' copulation with dogs brought home for the occasion. (One woman who did have sex with the dog as demanded, partici-



The Feb. 15-21 82 cover of Anashim, a "family" magazine, features the kind of sensuously brutal scene that is increasingly being woven into the family, women's and general-circulation media in Israel.

pated in the production of a pornographic film made by her husband.) Forced anal intercourse is common. Battered wives are clear in their testimony and analysis that the pornographers' material is used as both inspiration and as "certified male authority" by their husbands.

"There is one message basic to all kinds of pornography," said activist Andrea Dworkin in a speech at a 1979 March Against Pornography rally in New York: "She wants it; she wants to be beaten; she wants to be forced; she wants to be raped; she wants to be brutalized; she wants to be hurt. This is the premise, the first principle, of all pornography."

There is considerable evidence that porn triggers rape—as well as wife battery, incest, sexual harassment on the job and other assaults on women. Is it any different from providing scope and social place—often approval—in society to anti-Semitic or racist plays, cartoons, films, jokes? If such scope is given, anti-Semitism or racism, which is always present to some degree, will take root, grow, and become violent.

Pornography can be seen as the anti-Semitism of women. Feminists need not seek out pornography as an issue: it "finds" feminists—just as anti-Semitism finds the Jew, assimilated or not. In the same way that *Mein Kampf* was an issue for all Jews, pornography can be seen as an issue for all women.

Five years ago the incidence of pornography in Israel was lower than in the U.S. Today it is found in "legitimate" mass-circulation magazines as well as movie-house, billboard, radio and newspaper ads.

One major difference between Israeli and American pornography is that the pornographic themes of sadism, pseudo-homosexuality and child pornography are being woven into the daily family, women's and general circulation media, and the street and travel environment. Materials appear in Israeli family publications today which would still not be found in the back pages of *Playboy*. In the last few years, women's, family and youth magazines have featured advertising and "artistic" scenes which are "sensuously" brutal; in one case, sexual exploitation was combined with specifically Jewish symbols of the Holocaust.

Barely a magazine issue appears today which does not include some blatantly violent image assaulting female dignity. For example, *La Ishah*, the best-selling women's magazine in Israel, ran two suggestively-posed naked photos of Brooke Shields as an eight-year-old, next to her "grown-up" image. *Ladies' Home Journal* or any other legitimate American magazine would not run a picture of a naked 15-year old girl, yet some Israeli women's and family magazines have done just that, increasingly including sexually exploitative images of unclothed females writhing in various states of arousal or just casually decorating the pages as images of desirability. Here, the photos seem to say, is a *real* female (the model), a desirable woman or child, and you, the reader, are merely the pale imitation of this sexually uninhibited free spirit. In Israel today, a five- or eight-year-old child can open family newspapers and find pictures of couples engaged in foreplay.

In Israel, too, we appear to find more visible phallic imagery than in the U.S. While *Playboy* and *Penthouse* cover the male genitalia as carefully as they reveal the female genitalia, Israel's weekly *Bull* and its recent imitations, such as *Erotica*, are now offering semi-erect phalli.

All the imported so-called soft pornography (*Playboy/Penthouse/Hustler*) is sold at newsstands everywhere, in university bookstores and by Steimatsky's, Israel's major bookstore and newsstand distributor. European pornography, and black-and-white child pornography is also available, at high prices.

The Tel Aviv bus station—supported by tax payers' money—permits porn peddlers a virtual monopoly. They have the liberty to exhibit materials floor to ceiling in the ticket-selling area. I have personally seen pictures of children in pornographic poses sold there. No other merchants have space there, only the porn peddlers.

The huge billboard film advertisements for semi- or not so semi-pornographic films are unavoidable in Tel Aviv. In Natanya in 1981, a large billboard featured a naked teenager astride an adult male, with an "older" woman looking on.

"Blue movies" are growing in fashionable chic in many social circles across the nation. In the rush to emulate sophisticated Americans and Europeans, "Deep Throat" and "The Babysitters" join a complete selection of "X" videos and films shown at private parties, and Chanukah and Purim celebrations. Even gatherings to celebrate the birth of a baby girl have been known to include "blue" movies; and, according to a colleague, in an Egged Bus Company celebration in a city building last

year, Egged bus drivers and their wives disco-danced while a pornographic film was screened.

There are 100,000 video tapes in private Israeli homes, and pornographic tapes are a major sales item, according to Kol Israel Radio. One can also now order "hard-core" video tapes via local community newspaper supplements published in the daily papers. The supplements openly promote full pornographic displays, advertising the "Eros" sex shops and their sex aids.

Children are increasingly acting out their new "lessons" in the classroom, much to the distress of parents and teachers alike, according to *This Week in Natanya*, a local newspaper. Interviews with nursery school teachers and parents confirmed this phenomenon.

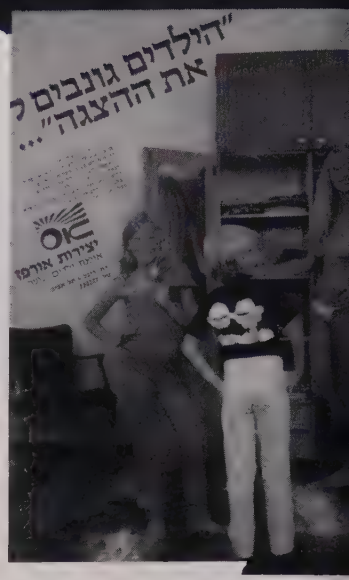
For its primarily male student body, the Technion (Haifa technical graduate school) students' organization procures and screens pornographic films about once a month at all major student events. Strip-shows supplement the belly dances on Purim and Student Day, while "live" so-called "lesbian sex acts" were featured at Oneg Shabbats. All are advertised in full-color posters on the Technion campus and on walls throughout Haifa. Student magazines have blatant sexist drawings, photos, and porno crossword puzzles. A major protest by the University Women's Association produced no change.

At a kibbutz in the far south, a young mother argued in an interview that since their friends began showing "blue" movies, her husband's sexual demands had increased in proportion to his lessening sensitivity. This kibbutz woman felt "betrayed" by her group of female friends, who claimed that they enjoyed the "blue movie" Tuesday night screenings in members' homes. Instead of supporting her feelings, she said, these women "increased my insecurity and feeling of isolation."

Displaying or selling pornography, "materials which incite sexual lust," is, by the way, absolutely against Israeli law, and subject to three months' imprisonment and a fine. However, as the courts, lawyers and police are still under the erroneous impression that sex crimes decreased in Denmark when pornography was legalized, they continue to view it as a trivial issue, and the law is not enforced.

(By contrast, Reuters reported in March that the French Government is considering a new bill under which anyone presenting images in newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, advertising, texts and public speeches deemed to be degrading to women through incitement to discrimination, hatred, violence, insult or defamation could face a prison term of up to one year and/or fines of up to $44,000. Presenting the bill to a Cabinet meeting, Women's Rights Minister Yvette Roudy said it was modeled on France's anti-racism law of 1972. A spokesperson for the Ministry said, "Ideally the law would not have to be applied but, after a few test cases, its very existence would have a dissuasive and preventative value.")

Many Israelis share an innocent belief that if the assault of such images were really dangerous, the academic, medical and governmental bodies, supported by public taxes to protect and inform the citizenry, would have seen to it that these materials would not be permitted. Ergo —the constant barrage of brutality and hate must be harmless.



"The children are upstaging me," reac text for this advertisement for chil clothing. Ads in Israeli family magazine creasingly include sexually exploitati ages of unclothed females."

Sexual violence as Israeli chic is most explicitly demonstrated in *Monitin*, Israel's slick largest selling monthly. *Monitin* claims to be a "family magazine" (for upper-class Israelis). It is sophisticated and expensive, aimed at the influential male and, secondarily, at his female partner. Begun in September, 1978 and at times distributed free in affluent neighborhoods, it has reached a 250,000 circulation.

Women are slabs of meat to *Monitin*'s photographic eye: cut up into manageable portions—legs, breasts, thighs, lips. The magazine has run photo images of battered (nude-sexy) women, women bound and tortured, women running in fear. And in one rape-murder sequence, a woman, apparently dead, dangles upside down in a bathing suit, one breast exposed.

Monitin cover women glare with vacant or hate-filled eyes, clenched fists, and gnashing teeth, projecting the belief that women are either victimizers, like these, or victims like those shown tortured or running. Its celebration of sex-sadism is surpassed only by its glamorization of anti-social activities, including "soft" drug use, which is often pictured as desirable and Euro-American.

Monitin prints a regular column by Dr. Ami Shaked, a leading sexologist and a former lecturer for the Ministry of Education. His columns are generally inane—except for the dangerous series in 1981 on incest, which cited the view of "many doctors" that all "loving" relationships are good, even should they include father-child sex. (He gives no such equal space to the "many doctors" who point out that incest can destroy children, or to documentation of the harm it can do.) His columns are consistently illustrated with violent and humiliating misogynist images. In one, a naked woman writhes in fear as a large screw is about to penetrate her vagina to "illustrate" Shaked's view of female fear of sexual intercourse.

Monitin has also featured sex/sadism photo displays in its issues. The most blatant and horrific example is what the Institute for the Study of Media and the Family calls the

itin's Dec. '79 issue featured a 6-page ad entitled "A locomotive is breathing n your neck—a fantasy on panties and " shows fearful women clad in under- (prices and stores are listed on the s of the pages) fleeing and alongside are caust symbols such as a WWII train and furnace.

Some women's magazines seem to have patterned themselves after Monitin and include "'fashionable' images of women in life-threatening situations." This rape scene, which was part of an ad for Hashi perfume, ran in Monitin—as well as in At and La Isha, both of them women's magazines.

Monitin Holocaust Fashion Spread. In these pages in the Dec. '79 issue, female victims clad in underwear are running away from Holocaust symbols—a freight (cattle) train of World War II vintage, a furnace and a light fixture resembling a shower-head.

Whether we are Jungian believers or not, the collective memories of any given people are a reality. Just as Lincoln's face recalls the Civil War to Americans and the four-leaf clover signals luck and Irish culture, and just as the swastika recalls Hitler to most people, so half-naked fleeing people and burning ovens are a collective Jewish memory of the Holocaust. Most of the people the Institute showed these pictures to registered shock. One would have to be uninformed about magazine photo-selection processes to consider the juxtaposition in *Monitin* "accidental."

Volunteers from the Institute went to Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Memorial Museum and Archive) on a tip from someone who claimed that there were photos there similar to those in *Monitin*. We found asbestos gloves similar to those in the *Monitin* spread, on the hands of the men in the Archive photo standing at the ovens pushing the bodies in. The light fixture in *Monitin* could clearly have come from the Yad Vashem photo of the "shower," which was hanging next to that of the oven and the gloved men. The purposeful use of Holocaust symbols was never denied by *Monitin*'s editor, or Gerrard Elon, its photographer. *Monitin's* silence continues.

Over the last few years, some women's magazines seem to have patterned themselves after *Monitin*. "Fashionable" images of women in life-threatening surroundings, mirrors shrouded in yellow sheets, opium-den environs, children decorously ignored by elegantly dressed or whorehouse-dressed models, have all become common in *At*, a leading monthly women's magazine.

La Ishah, the largest-selling Israeli weekly, always offers bare breasts. In September, 1981 it presented a nude full-bosomed 15-year-old girl in high heels, her hand propped on her hip and a provocative expression on her face. In our interview with Zvi Algar, the magazine's male editor, his excuse for this brazen sexual exploitation of an adolescent was that the girl's mother had approved. He added: "Everybody's doing it. We can't hide from the rest of the world. We are a mirror of society. This [children's exploitation] is happening—we just mirror it."

In fact, general fashion ads everywhere for children's clothing increasingly pose children in provocative but "cute" poses.

Lee jeans and Gali shoe ads stress stripping—females taking off their clothes either in the presence of males in the picture or with the males outside it viewing the stripper—"putting out" and general alienation. These ads clearly trigger youthful fears, including the very realistic fear of young girls that they might not be chosen.

A 1982 Zivanit company boot ad shows two naked children of about three years of age; the boy is embracing and about to kiss the girl. They wear boots and hats and stand before a full-length mirror on a shag rug—like Mommy and Daddy. In this case, the editor of *La Ishah* pulled the ad because the text-plus-photo, he said, were clearly structured "child pornography." The editor admitted that his art director was aware of the implications but "explained" that since everyone else in Israel was using this "purposefully pornographic" image, their magazine had originally included it as well.

Ma'ariv LaNoar (*Maariv* For Youth, published by *Ma'ariv* daily) only five years ago (*sans* advertisements) was respected as a real youth magazine. It now offers girls its whore-image-as-fashion: spend, be, look and "do" sexy, or you will be out—left alone with no love and no life. These are the powerful signals the children are flashed week after week in perfect classical "conditioning" situations, as these magazine images are usually received as "information" in the home.

As a result of various protests, the Ministry of Education reprimanded *Ma'ariv LaNoar* in 1981, urging it to change its blatantly exploitative advertising campaigns. Fewer sexual attacks and oral sex scenes were in

This 1982 Zivanit company boot ad was originally to run in La Isha women's weekly, as it had in other "family" magazines, but the editor pulled it because he thought it was clearly child pornography.

Gali shoe ads, like this one for "Scandalim" sandals for adolescents, stress "general alienation" and trigger "the very realistic fear of young girls that they may not be chosen" by teen boys.

order, they said. However, since then the ads have actually become significantly more violent and more pornographic.

Images such as the pseudo-lesbian shampoo and clothing ads—where three models nuzzle, gazing deeply into the eyes of the "beloved"—appear in *Ma'ariv LaNoar* and in *LaHiton*, a magazine which caters to "the family" and reaches a large number of youth under 18. This magazine focuses upon entertainment and fun; half-nude, pornographically posed females regularly surround such female heroines as the popular Brooke Shields. *LaHiton* charge cards are also pushed on the 16-year olds.

It seems that what is being sold in all these cases is not pornography alone, but an Israeli version of the "*Playboy* lifestyle." Research confirms that the major target audience for the new Israeli "*Playboy* lifestyle" is, as always, the under-35 market. The effectiveness of this new life-style campaign can be observed in an event that took place on a kibbutz in the far south in 1981. Before Purim, a group of 15-year-old boys sent a letter to parents and teachers warning them and their small children to keep away from the pre-Purim festivities usually provided by the kibbutz youth. Why? Because these boys had cut out *Playboy* and *Penthouse* centerfolds and other pictures of females spread-eagled and fingering their vaginas, and had pasted and hung them throughout the youth room where they held their own elite Purim celebration. No corrective action was taken regarding the sexism, alienation and elitism involved here.

Significantly, the chorus of a popular new song "Another Sex" goes, "We don't want our virgin girls any more. Give us the ones from the magazines."

Police and juvenile officers are seriously alarmed about the increased vandalism, dope and liquor use as well as the increase in youthful general crime. They believe that most Israeli youngsters cannot buy all the items—the package, the "*Playboy* lifestyle"—promoted daily on all sides. They claim that raising unwarranted expectations of the youth is responsible for the frustration which is leading youngsters into anti-social behavior of all kinds.

Pornography did not drop from the sky: it was a well-planned, expensive effort, a concentrated marketing assault on the minds, hearts, values and pocketbooks of Israelis. Millions of dollars are now earned in pornography, and merchandizers look to it and to other luxury items (stereos, fashion, liquor) for astronomical profits. In selling this "*Playboy* lifestyle" package, the Israeli communications/advertising experts understood and exploited a relatively unsophisticated population anxious to be a part of what they perceived as worldly Western culture.

The reasons for its easy acceptance are complex, but one, surely, is the spiritual loss Israel has suffered over the past ten years, particularly since 1973—the loss of a belief in its own ideals, in Zionism, Judaism, a shared past and a shared future. As Israelis began to lose confidence in their own dream, they became susceptible to another to fill the void. As Israelis began to lose their cultural pride, they embraced the glamour and ideology of Western consumption.

But the "*Playboy* lifestyle" is a package deal. The growing consumption of liquor, drugs and luxuries goes hand in hand with the growth of consumption of pornography. While Israeli youth still retain an involvement, an interest, a commitment and an eager sense of humor and honor, time is not on their side. Things are moving too fast—and we are not responding to the changes adequately. Considering the high level of tension and anxiety under which the nation lives, Israel may be at grave risk from the problems triggered by pornography.

Dr. Judith Bat-Ada is director of the Institute for the Study of Media and the Family, an educative and investigative organization concerned with the effect of anti-female image/information upon the life and liberty of women and children in Israel.

THE WOUNDS OF WAR

by Joyce Rosman Brenner

At a feminist conference in October, 1982, in one particular workshop, the main feeling the women had was anger about their helplessness with regard to war: they are not out there making the decisions about whether Israel gets involved with a flare-up or not. Their men get called up and they feel more helpless, seeing men having to go off to fight and not having any recourse.

During a time of crisis, the role of nurturing—that you must be available to the males who go off to battle— becomes dominant and important. When a soldier returns, it has to be to what the culture perceives as a warm home, with a warm person there to greet this person who has risked his life. No woman can really refuse to do that.

I don't think it's a situation of a guy walking into the house and saying: "How come there is no cake ready for me, what kind of a wife *are* you? — Here I am up there killing myself and you're at home not doing anything!" I think there must be something in a woman's psyche that feels, "What can *I* do—what is the little item I can contribute to alleviating the tension the country is feeling? And if it is cake, and that seems to show love to my husband, son or brother, at least let me do that."

I can sympathize and empathize with that because last summer in Israel I saw soldiers on the road coming home for Shabbat—dragging themselves home exhausted. People wanted to do something, so we sent cars every Friday back and forth to the border so the soldiers wouldn't have to deal with buses and hitchhiking. It wasn't only women who were doing this. There were older men who weren't fighting who were trying do do things to show the soldiers that they were also out there supporting them and being part of the battle.

After some articles were written on the conference about women in war, and specifically on the workshop where women expressed their helplessness, there was a reaction from other women who asked, "Why can't you just bake your cake and be nurturing and be kind and loving?" The majority of the 40 letters published in the *Jerusalem Post* say, "What is wrong with these women, why are they afraid of their femininity and afraid of being women?"

Underlying this was the feeling that this nurturing was necessary to the country's defense, and that failing to carry it out means you're somehow disloyal.

My feeling is that nurturing is something you want to give in response to a pressing and urgent need, an emergency, such as when someone is sick. It is the same thing when the country is "sick"—during a war or crisis—and your husband, son or brother goes into the reserves or on active duty. Before he leaves and when he returns can be considered "sick time," an emergency.

What is making women feel helpless and frustrated is having to live in a situation where the "emergency," the "sick time" seems to go on forever, with no let-up in sight. And women feel trapped—they cannot refuse to give nurturing to those they love, but they are almost burned out. And at the same time, they have no real say in the decisions regarding war and peace.

Until recently, the male cultural role model has been one that closes out the sensitive man and encourages a strong image. You have a country that is living a continual war, even when it is not actively at battle. In order to socialize young men to be successful during their army service, you have to build on their strength.

After the war I talked with a lot

of men who were soldiers in the Sinai Campaign when in their 20's; now, in their early 50's, they got called up and saw active service again. Between their 20's and 50's, they've had kids and their lives have changed. I have seen men who are troubled and in pain. A neighbor of mine said, "When I pick up that gun, I hate myself. I can't conceive of going to the front again, and I know that if I get called up I have no choice." His friend, who was sitting in the same room while we were talking, said, "Ah, you know when we get together and we're with the group, it's okay, it's like part of the *chevreh* (group)."

When I talk to 18-year-olds—because my daughter dates boys this age, just before they go into the Army—I ask them how they feel about this, and they say: "We try not to think too much about it." Maybe it is a healthy defense.

I have heard two young men who come to the house, beautiful boys of 19, talking about the terrible things they've seen, and they are frightened. They say, it is the hardest thing in the world when you know you are up there protecting our country that you care about and love, and you really want to be home, going to the university and being with the people you love. They feel the dichotomy of their 19-year-old struggles, but they have to incorporate the Army, some of the Army, into their lives.

Lately the professional people in the Army—psychologists and social workers—have been more sensitive to this, and have been organizing groups at the front for soldiers, right when they come off active-duty status, to give them an opportunity to "decompress." They are terrified and they have to be strong. At least if, when they come home, we allow them, with professional help, to be a little weak, they may be "weak" with their wives or with other loved ones.

If we begin to allow these young men the opportunity to ventilate and to talk about their ambivalence, then they can begin to relate to the women in their lives in a different way.

My ideal would be that we also get them to nurture women when *they* need nurturing. That is a response we have to build in people while they're young, not only in Israel but everyplace. Both sexes need nurturing; it is not only the women's job to provide it.

I go into the high schools to try to talk about roles. The girls are much more sophisticated than the boys. They are much more conscious; their consciousness has been raised. They don't want to be like their mothers, active only in the kitchen. They want to have three children; they are not going to have eight or nine children like their mothers. They don't want to go into the Army and just be clerks serving coffee to the generals. [See article on Shuli Eshel's film on women in the Israeli Army, *LILITH* #8.] They want to be more creative, and they all want to work.

I ask boys and girls, if you were of a different gender, how would your life be different? The girls get into a lot of interesting things: they talk about career choices that might be different, and the freedom that they would have, coming home late at night, things like that. The boys cannot do this exercise. They absolutely freeze, there is no response—they can't deal with it at all. They are apparently threatened. They also cannot think of a single positive thing in a woman's life. Every so often they say: "Well, that means I would stay home and have nothing to do." And then the girls say, "What do you mean, nothing?" The boys don't even say it would be wonderful to have kids.

One recent study shows that kibbutz kids at three years of age already see the differences between male and female roles. At three years old, kids usually say they want to be all sorts of things; they mix up firefighters, garbage collectors, mommies and daddies, teachers and everything else together. Here, the girls said they couldn't decide what they wanted to be because they couldn't see anything they wanted to be.

When I came here on aliya seven years ago and people found out I have three daughters, the typical response was, "Oh, how sad for you that you have no sons." But last year, I got a startlingly different response when the question came up. People said to me, "You're lucky, you won't have to worry about your sons getting killed in the war."

I do not think the war issue is going to go away in our immediate future. I hope that there will not be too many more active flare-ups. The war issue will continue to exist and we have to cope with its ups and downs, its cyclical outbreaks. We still have to contribute our energies to the things we care about. We are going to have to organize and we are going to have to get political. ●

This is excerpted from a recent talk given by Dr. Brenner, a Lecturer at the School of Social Work of Bar-Ilan University in Israel and a feminist therapist in private practice.

Israeli Mother Condemns Lebanese War

by Raya Harnick

The ongoing war situation in Israel has propelled some women into active protest. One such woman is Raya Harnick, a program editor for Kol Israel Radio, and a peace activist. A widow (her husband, musician Meir Harnick, was killed in a road accident 11 years ago), she lost a son last June in Lebanon. Major Guni (Giora) Harnick was commander of the Golani Patrol and was in charge of the capture of Beaufort Castle in the Lebanon war. Shortly after he fell, Raya Harnick was interviewed by Beruriah Avidan-Barir of La Isha *magazine.*

In the interview, Harnick excoriates the government for launching an "unnecessary war," and blames herself for the "nationalistic" education she gave her son which encouraged him to choose the Army as his career.

Harnick does not protest the war as a feminist, but as a bereaved mother. Her feelings of self-blame prompt certain feminist questions, however: are they to be seen as the response of a traditional mother who takes on responsibility—and guilt—for her children's lives? Or are they a kind of rebellion against *the powerlessness Israeli women feel, saying, in effect, "I* did *have the power to do something differently but did not use it correctly"? Or are both reasons intertwined?*

When the interview appeared in the June 14, 1982 issue of La Isha, *it touched off a storm of reactions, both supportive and critical. Harnick's articulation of her own emotions revealed the complex circuitry of feelings of many Israeli women—guilt, anger, pain, love of the country and fear for its future, a questioning of its values and their own as well. We reprint a short excerpt of the interview, in a translation by Leonard Levy, with the kind permission of* La Isha.

[Q: What was Guni like?]

A: Intelligent, but not an intellectual. He played the trumpet and the piano. He and his friends in high school were wonderful kids who...participated in various youth movements and activities, and worked with disadvantaged youngsters.

Q: Did he take part, as a child, in games of war?

A: All the children in the neighborhood played soldier; he assigned ranks to all of them...From a very young age, Guni wanted to be a *moshavnik* [farmer] or a soldier. Meir did not view Guni's military ambitions sympathetically.

Q: And you?

A: I admit I became disillusioned by my national-chauvinist dream much too late. Today, chauvinism is a dirty word. Therefore, instead of chauvinism, let us say "national-Zionist-heroic education." Yes, I gave my children a nationalistic education. We all did.

I remember taking Guni for a walk in a stroller when he was two-and-a-half years old. I stopped on Keren Hayesod Street, in sight of the wall around the Old City [then occupied by Jordan], pointed toward the Old City and said to my infant son: "You must understand that *that* belongs to us!"

I remember how, on the eve of the Six-Day War, Nasser shrieked threats on the radio. Roni, our second child, was then a boy in kindergarten. He said to me: "Mommy, if there is a war, I will leave the country!" My own son say a thing like that?! I blew up in front of him like a firecracker. I told him about the War of Liberation, about the period of establishment of the State, about the *Galut* [Exile], about the period before establishment of the State, and I told him that, in the Exile, he could expect to be called obscenities, such as "kike"....

When people asked Noa where her father was, she would say that he had been killed on the road. This reply never seemed to impress anyone. Noa, a little girl with a child's courage would ask: "Mommy, why couldn't Daddy have been killed in a war?"

The shock that most of the population absorbed after the Yom Kippur War, I felt after the Six-Day War. At the Western Wall I asked myself: "Is this wall worth the price of the death of even *one* young paratrooper, to say nothing of the hundreds who actually fell?" However, there was no sense in arguing with Guni. It was already too late.

Q: Do you feel that, had you given your son a less nationalistic upbringing, he might be alive today?

A: Perhaps, just perhaps, had I brought Guni up differently, he would now be a *moshavnik* or would be involved in the sciences. Guni is dead, and I feel guilty for his death because of the nationalistic upbringing that I gave him from the time he was a baby. His blood is on my hands!

Q: Are you a pacifist?

A: No! If Guni had to battle for his home, with his back to the wall, I would not expect him to simply stand there, raise his hands in surrender, and be taken prisoner. But to fight for Beaufort Castle? This [the Lebanon war] has been an unnecessary war...the result of cynical political deliberation. Guni felt exactly as I do about it being an unnecessary war.

Q: When Meir was killed, were you also wracked by feelings of guilt?

A: No. And here is where the political aspect comes in. Even if a drunken driver had struck my husband, it would not have been premeditated murder. However, my son was murdered because of an unnecessary war. Within a year or so, the terrorists will infiltrate into the same places they were expelled from, and with the same weaponry. But those [soldiers] who were killed will not return—ever!

Q: Is the State of Israel supposed to remain passive in the face of terrorist attacks?

A: How many Katyusha rockets would have to fall on Israel, over the course of years, in order for the number of dead to equal those killed during several days of battle?

After the Yom Kippur War, I put together a program about mothers bereaved from 1948 on. I wanted to demonstrate that, after all, life goes on and the parents still led active lives. But what it actually demonstrated was the diametric opposite: Bereavement had robbed many parents' lives of meaning.

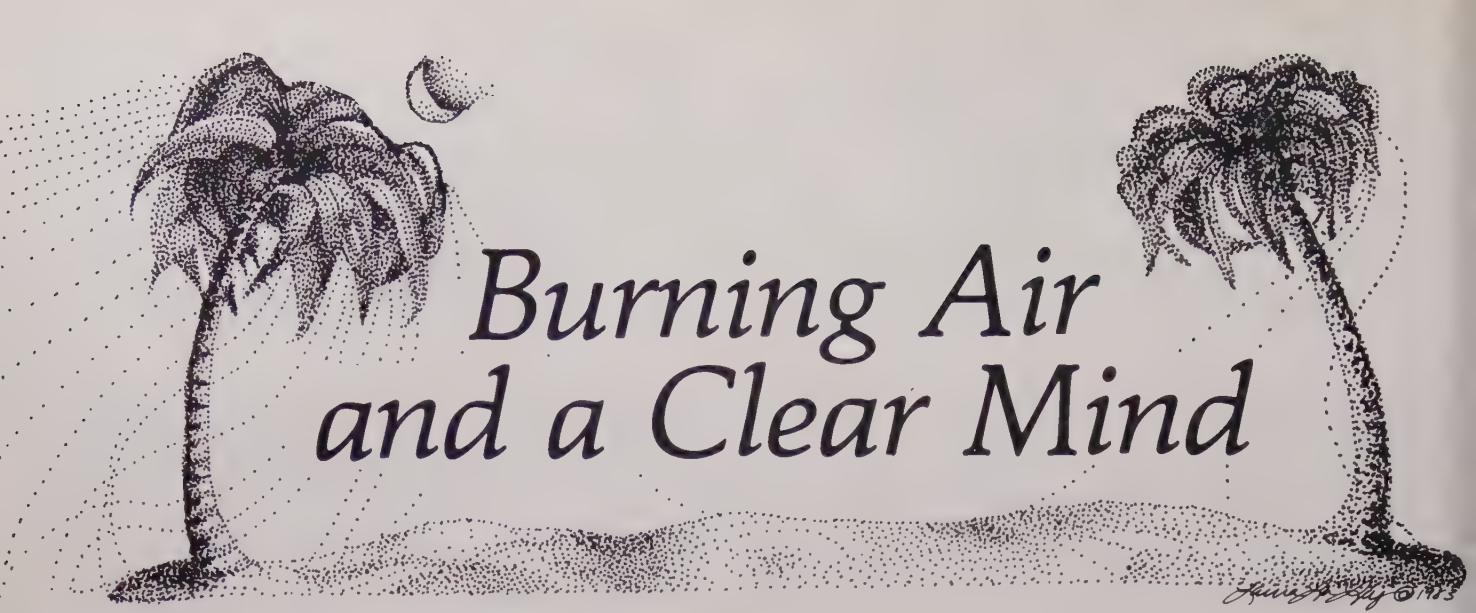
I will never create a program like that again. I simply cannot. I cannot be dispassionately objective regarding Guni's not having children of his own, or about my own personal tragedy, or about Israel's national tragedy.

Every ten years, we spill the blood of our very best youth.

We cut down the cream of every generation.

This nation is committing suicide.

Illustration, Papercut by Lisel Wahrlich



Burning Air and a Clear Mind

by Sharon Weinstein

Burning Air and a Clear Mind: Contemporary Israeli Women Poets. *Selected, edited and with an introduction by Myra Glazer, with drawings by Shirley Faktor. Ohio University Press, 1981. Cloth, $17.95; paper, $8.95.*

The poems in this collection of contemporary Israeli women poets are hard gems of crystal rock flickering madly in the dark. Nothing in them is easy. Written by 18 women who range in age from their 20's to their 80's, who were born in such diverse places as Russia, Cyprus, Ramat Gan, Seattle, and Jerusalem, the poems nonetheless bear witness to a remarkably similar vision. The quintessential woman of these poems is a solitary figure in a desolate landscape, the visionary who warns, recreates, even redeems—but whom no one heeds. She is an outsider to the common culture of men and the daytime world:

> *A solitary woman in a nylon scarf.*
> *What is she,*
> *against thunder and lightning?*
> *Raquel Chalfi*
> ("Tel Aviv Beach, Winter '74")

These poets do not share cozy, contented human relationships. Rather, they are outsiders, bewildered, joyous: looking in or looking at. The sense of isolation extends even to other women. Esther Raab (born in Petach Tikva in 1899) sustains an image of

> *My poor raging sisters*
>
> *floating on turbulent waves*
> *to your end—your hands*
> *are raised to me, your*
> *fingers search for a hold*
> *on the surface of the sea.*
>
> *Your open eyes fasten*
> *me: help! help!*
> *But fate has already*
> *cut the life-lines. Only spider webs*
> *are left in my*
> *hands.*
> ("My Poor Raging Sisters")

Not even sisterhood seems possible, except indirectly. The narrator of the poem is "the woman who sits / on cliffs of rock" dragging "a perplexed finger / along crumbling tendons of sand." Women appear out of reach—even to each other.

Isolated from the apparent center, these women make their own. Staking claim to their terrain in their own way, their voices sing in the darkness. Rivka Miriam (a native Jerusalemite) writes:

> *I am a woman made of fragments*
> *living in a land full of prophets*
> *and playing my flute.*
>
> • • •
>
> *I am a woman crumpled in a land of prophets*
> *sucking on the nectar of flowers,*
> *gathering people to me who stay*
> *a few hours, leave,*
> *who come at night and at dawn disappear.*
> ("Flute")

Imagery of the moon is especially dominant: "It was gentle, Far away, the moon crumbled into the sea," Chedva Harakavy ("It Was Gentle"); "The moon is teaching Bible," Zelda ("The Moon Is Teaching Bible"); "And the moon ran like crazy in his wide crater not knowing which girl to choose," Rivka Miriam ("In That Green Field"); "A moon gnaws the window, hangs itself on a wall," Shlomit Cohen ("So Abruptly").

In the surreal poem "Lunatics" by Raquel Chalfi, we are led to imagine the moon attempting to straddle two worlds—once moving out of its sphere, paying a price for its folly.

Dr. Sharon Weinstein is an Associate Professor of English at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. She is taking a year's leave of absence to complete work on a novel.

Imagine a moon
walking in pallor
falling off his bed, walking
the world moonstruck
climbing a wall
wishing to take off
dreaming he's the sun in its glory

little stars chase him
calling him
mad mad

Although the moon is masculine here (in Hebrew the word for moon may be either masculine or feminine), the effect may still suggest the image of women as transparent and vulnerable, in a dimension different from the "norm."

The constant in these poems is the land. The poets identify, almost merge, with nature. There is no dominion *over* nature; women are a part of nature; they *are* nature. Raquel Chalfi writes:

I am like a field waiting.
Thistles swarm in my flesh and an olive tree
thick with generations feeds
off me.
At the field's edge little animals lie
in ambush for my end.
("Like a Field Waiting")

Zelda shows us:

At midnight, on the grief
of my face,
a strange plant's celebration
streamed like gold.
("Strange Plant")

And Leah Goldberg (who died over eight years ago) envisions herself:

I lie like a stone on the hill,
indifferent and silent
in the withered, sun-seared grass.

• • •

A stone among stones, I do not know
the ancientness of my life
or who will yet come
and with a kick
send me rolling down the slope.
("In the Jerusalem Hills")

There is a clear but surface quality of passivity to many of these nature images. One must realize, too, that waiting can be a sure sign of lasting strength. Patience abounds.

One of the most charming poems is "First Tooth," by Molly Myerowitz Levine (born in the United States, now teaching at Bar Ilan University). Mother and infant breakfast together:

Two companions.
I with my poems and coffee,
you with your work
a twist of bread.

A sense of motion:

Your feet
flat little oars
paddle the air.

Of togetherness:

Sometimes we pause
to plait smiles
understanding each other's business.

The child, after sobs in the night, shows signs in the morning of "the first picket," further unifying the two of them because:

Now you have an
edge on the world.
So may it be
with me.

As the poems themselves suggest a collective identity —the individual women's voices blending into a hard but true Israeli song—so, too, was the effort to bring these poems to light a collective response. Editor Myra Glazer, senior lecturer in foreign literature at Ben Gurion University, is a writer living in the United States and Israel. Two of her poems are included in this collection. But more important than her poems—or even her fine and subtle introduction—was her role as leader of the Beersheba Poetry Workshop, with six of her former students, which met for two years, studying and translating the poetry of Israeli women. Without the translations from the Hebrew by Myra Glazer, Tova Weizman, Marcia Falk and others, this collection would not have appeared in the United States. Perhaps it was the collective consciousness of the Poetry Workshop that made the poetry selections seem all of a piece, parts fitting into a whole. Anthologies do not usually blend so well. Even the fleshy, overripe contours of the women in the drawings by Jerusalem artist Shirley Faktor seem precisely right for this collection.

Faktor's drawing of "Lot's Wife"—suggesting both forward motion and that irrevocable pull back—is particularly marvelous. It accompanies the poem by Shirley Kaufman, "His Wife." This gem of a poem appropriates legend and makes it new. It answers all the spoken and unspoken criticism of Lot's wife (what an identity to carry around forever!):

But it was right that she
looked back. Not to be
curious, some lumpy
reaching of the mind
that turns all shapes to pillars.
But to be only who she was
apart from them, the place
exploding, and herself
defined. Seeing them melt
to slag heaps and the flames
slide into their mouths.
Testing her own lips then,
the coolness, till
she could taste the salt.

A total affirmation of what she was and what she did.

The zest, the imagination of these Israeli women moved me immediately and powerfully from the realm of daily routine, from frequent walks on the surface. The poems are raw, powerful, immediate, and necessary. ●

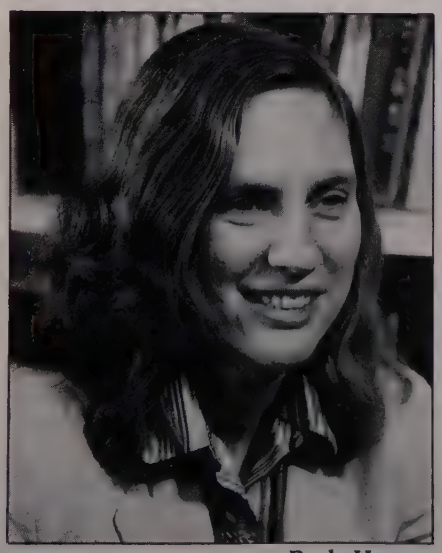
Lilith Interview

After a Decade of Jewish Feminism

THE JEWRY IS STILL OUT

In 1972, a group of Jewish women petitioned the Conservative movement's rabbis for equal access for women to Jewish religious experience, expression and education. This petition marked the beginning of the current Jewish feminist movement. Dr. Paula Hyman and Arlene Agus, founding members of that group, which called itself Ezrat Nashim, now hold professional positions in the Jewish educational establishment: Hyman is one of the highest-ranking women in a Jewish institution in the U.S.: Dean of the College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Associate Professor of History; and Agus is Director of External Affairs and Planning for the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University. Both women have been actively writing and lecturing on Jewish women's issues for the past decade. Hyman is co-author of The Jewish Woman in America, *author of* From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry 1906-1939, *and co-editor of a volume on the Jewish family, to be published next year by Holmes and Meier. Agus, coordinator of the two national Jewish women's conferences of 1973 and 1974, is the author of the landmark article on women's use of Jewish tradition, "This Month Is for You: Observing Rosh Chodesh as a Women's Holiday," which appeared in the 1976 Schocken anthology,* Jewish Women: New Perspectives*; and is a founding board member of the Drisha Institute, an institution of higher learning for women.*

Here they talk to LILITH about the landmarks in the Jewish women's rights struggle over the past ten years—and about the attitudes that will have to change if Judaism is to respond effectively and justly to women's legitimate demands.



Paula Hyman

Arlene Agus

LILITH: It's been 10 years since the Jewish feminist movement began.—The first National Jewish Women's Conference was in April, 1973, the same year Rabbi Sally Priesand was ordained by the Reform movement. And the year before marked the formation of Ezrat Nashim, the first contemporary Jewish feminist group, with which both of you were associated.

PAULA HYMAN: I think if you take all that happened in 1972-1973 as a package, then we've been at this for somewhat over 10 years. The appearance of the members of Ezrat Nashim at the [Conservative Movement's] Rabbinical Assembly meeting at the Concord Hotel in March of 1972 with a fairly well-thought-out statement and a list of demands—many of which are still on our agenda—is what I would mark as the formal beginning of Jewish feminism.

ARLENE AGUS: To me the appearance at the RA was a culmination rather than a beginning, although in terms of political clout it caused an exponential change. I remember campus movements among Jewish women in the 60's, but not organized ones. The conceptualization [of a Jewish feminist movement] started with our more general feelings of secondary status and the absence of access to Judaism. Also, it came from a negative point of view—we felt there was an anti-Jewish focus among general feminists and we felt protective about Judaism. The more protective we felt, the more we started looking into our defensiveness only to find that our own experience as women didn't support what we were feeling.

HYMAN: We had heard about a discussion at the New York *Havurah*, where one man had led a discussion about his response to the liturgy, specifically about the sexual nature of Shabbat and how the Friday night service was a ritual enactment of making love. It was all presented in explicitly male sexual terms and it was a male response to the liturgy, and the women there were struck by the fact that he was presenting it as though his response to the liturgy were valid for everybody. It was like, "click," and we said we have to have our own study group to figure out what kind of responses *we* have.

AGUS: There were two equally horrifying possibilities: either his approach was true and we had missed the point of our own liturgy, or it wasn't true—and in that case, what *was* true? People then began to notice that we were referring only to male ancestors in the prayers. We had never noticed that before or we hadn't allowed ourselves to notice it before, but we had no choice now but to notice it. And what was

it we were going to do? We thought one of the old tried and true ways of answering questions was to study, to learn about them and find out more of what you're talking about. It was one way at least of postponing having to make political decisions.

HYMAN: Actually, we turned to politics very, very early: the group didn't get organized until the Fall of 1971 and we were already at the Rabbinical Assembly with our mimeographed statements in March 1972. What had happened was that after two months of studying, we realized that we had good Jewish backgrounds and that our intuitive experience—our sense of lack of access and secondary status in Judaism—could be relied upon. I think we also felt a sense of mission: that this potentially affected all Jewish women and the rest of the community. And for us to sit and simply serve *ourselves* by studying was irresponsible.

AGUS: When we first started realizing that we could trust our intuition, we started allowing our rage to be legitimate, because we felt that it came from legitimate Jewish guts and was grounded in all the right Jewish values.

LILITH: What was on the agenda presented to the RA in 1972 and to what degree has it been achieved?

HYMAN: The agenda was a full and complete one. First of all, it defined a problem and it offered a feminist analysis. It said the Jewish tradition, which was once progressive regarding women—something I'm not sure really was true—was now out of date, that women lacked equal access to the heart of the tradition and equal access to positions of power and status within the community—and that this is an ethical and political problem confronting Jewry.

Then we developed a specific set of demands: we asked that women be given positions of power within the organized Jewish community. We asked that women be permitted and encouraged by all branches of Judaism to be rabbis and cantors. We asked that women be counted in a *minyan* (quorum of 10 worshippers) and given *aliyot* (calls to the Torah reading). *Aliyot* had been available as an option as early as 1955, but we included it on our list. We asked that the disabilities that women have been subject to in divorce proceedings also be dealt with by the Jewish community. We asked that women be declared obligated under Jewish law to observe all the commandments, because we recognized that the exemption of women from certain time-bound commandments placed women in a second-class category vis-a-vis Jewish tradition.

LILITH: Do you see this as the core of the religious problem?

HYMAN: I think it is an important theoretical issue because in the decisions that are being made in other areas, the halachic [Jewish legal] considerations are all linked to this exemption of women from most positive time-bound commandments. In Jewish law if you're not obligated, you're in an inferior position to those who *are* obligated. I think those of us who are formed by Western concepts would tend to think that if you choose to take upon yourself obligations that are not legally yours, this placed you in a higher category because you're volunteering for them. But in Jewish law, you're in a lower category. Second, if you are not obligated, you cannot help others who are obligated to fulfill their obligations. A *minyan* is supposed to be formed as a prayer quorum of those who are *obligated* to pray. So to leave out this central issue of obligation is to fudge the question of counting women in the *minyan*.

Also on the issue of women serving as cantors: the cantor in Jewish law, the *chazan*, is the representative of the community and helps the members of the congregation fulfill their obligation to pray. If the cantor herself is not obligated to pray, there are problems with whether she is halachically qualified to help others fulfill their obligations, or to represent them in doing so. Those who are concerned about women serving as cantors and rabbis are concerned because of the legal status of women who are not obligated.

LILITH: How can this be remedied?

HYMAN: There is a real reluctance—certainly on the part of the Conservative movement, not to mention the Orthodox community, which hasn't addressed this issue at all—to use some of the mechanisms that exist within *halachah* to rectify what I would see as this major problem in the tradition regarding its view of women.

One mechanism would be the *takanah*, the rabbinic enactment. It was used throughout history to deal with major social problems, and it was also always a response to social reality.

I think the social reality of women in the modern world is not the same kind of social reality that you see reflected in the Jewish tradition. One could issue a *takanah* and say that the reality of womens' lives today is such that there is no longer any conceivable rationale [such as women having conflicting time obligations to care for their families] for excluding them from observing all the positive time-bound commandments.

LILITH: Who is going to make such a takanah?

HYMAN: Judaism at this point, for better or for worse, is an institutionalized religion, and therefore the major institutions in Jewish life have to make some of these decisions. There are such institutions. The Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, for example, could and does issue decisions. It issues both majority and minority reports, and individual rabbis can accept either one of them. Counting women in the *minyan*, for example, was a majority decision in 1973.

There absolutely must also be a *takanah* that women's testimony is valid. It is an insult to every woman to be told that our testimony is not valid in Jewish law courts according to *halachah*.

LILITH: Why hasn't this been done yet?

HYMAN: People are reluctant to use the *takanah* mechanism; first, out of a sense of humility: "We do not have sufficient authority to use these mechanisms as our forefathers did." Second, there's the argument of Rabbi Joel Roth, the head of the [Conservative] rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary, that it would be unfair to women who don't want to be obligated to be compelled by rabbinic decision to be obligated. On the other hand, from the vantage point of Jewish tradition, men have no choice whether or not they want to be obligated: they *are* obligated. I think a *takanah* would make women face the same decisions about their religious observance that men have to face. It would obviously affect the lives of Orthodox women profoundly.

LILITH: And they are not interested in this issue at all?

HYMAN: I have been at conferences where observant men will get up to *daven*, and I always chafe because not only don't they invite me, but it is very clear that they don't want me to be there in the room, even if I am not being counted by them. But the Orthodox women that I am with will say things like: "I'm so glad that I don't have to face these problems that the men face. How would I ever do it?" It is a real kind of "poor weak me" position. These are women who handle everything else in their lives—they are professional women; they manage their families. But if they think of having to *daven* at eight o'clock in the morning, this suddenly becomes something that they cannot handle.

The situation where women are not obligated leads to a kind of deprecation of their religious sensibility and of their strength.

LILITH: Granted, this is important for religiously committed women. But why

"Equality for women is so fundamental that if you don't accept it you don't belong in our community."

should secular Jewish women be concerned about it?

HYMAN: I think that these issues have enormous ramifications for the ways in which Jewish women see themselves and in the ways in which they are perceived by others. Judaism is still a religious civilization; Judaism was always a religio-ethnic community. Religion has always been central and is central in what it means to be a Jew. In America you might argue it's become even more religious in terms of its definition and self-definition than it ever was throughout history.

So that even if you personally are not religious, if you do identify as a Jew and the Jewish tradition says that women have only a marginal connection with serious Jewish study, and that women have only a marginal connection with many *mitzvot* [commandments], and that women's role is to be enablers for their husbands and their sons—and that indeed the Adam-Eve story in Genesis is intended to tell us that God wants families organized in a patriarchal fashion—then your self-image, your sense of self, is affected by these prevailing dominant images within the Jewish tradition. That is why I think it is important for an alternative vision to be granted legitimacy by the Jewish community. Feminism is very much an alternative vision to the patriarchal underpinnings of Jewish tradition throughout history.

LILITH: Some in the Jewish community argue that feminism is a very narcissistic, selfish philosophy—and that it is in some way in conflict with Jewish values.

HYMAN: I think *that* element in feminism *is* in conflict with Jewish values, which stress the good of the community. But that element in *modern life* is in conflict with Jewish values. Individual achievement is not really an essential part of the Jewish tradition. Incidentally, the feminist argument that denying an individual the opportunity to express, to find, to pursue happiness wherever it may lie was powerful because it's in tune with the American culture. I don't think it's so powerful in the traditional Jewish community.

On the other hand, when I hear the narcissism argument directed against women, it seems that I am hearing that it is only women who should defer any sense of self-gratification and achievement, for the good of the community. There is a double standard that is being applied here, because I don't hear people telling Jewish men that they shouldn't be achievement-oriented or that they should curtail their careers in order to focus all their energies on the survival of the Jewish community.

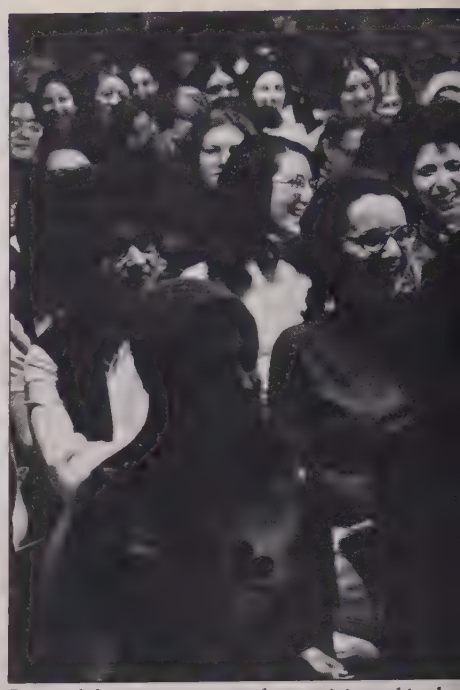
I would add that the "self-gratification" element is one strand within feminism. There is also sisterhood, and there is a strong element of cooperation within feminism that I think could only work to the benefit of the Jewish community. It could be seen as a different kind of model as to how people should relate to each other, a cooperative rather than a competitive model.

It seems to me that the issues that Jewish feminists have raised can be divided into two different categories: 1) equal access, and 2) the feminization of culture. Certainly much of what Ezrat Nashim was asking of the Conservative movement in 1972 had to do with equal access, that women should have all the opportunities that men have had to participate fully in religious and secular life and to have positions of status and authority. To my mind, we haven't achieved the equal access. We also haven't done enough in the other realm, the feminization of culture. What would a feminist perspective tell us about how human beings should relate to each other? As Judaism depends upon the ongoing reinterpretation of sources, what would a *feminist* interpretation of Jewish sources and Jewish experience and the Jewish past contribute to all Jews?

LILITH: Why haven't Jewish feminists done enough in this realm?

HYMAN: We are reluctant to get too far from the Jewish community. We can't simply do what a number of more radical feminists have done, which is to say: "I will build an ideology and a view of the world based only on women's experience and that will be sufficient" (for example, Mary Daly's Exodus communities), or to say: "Women should just walk out of these institutions and meet their own spiritual needs." I don't think Jewish feminists can do that or want to. That means that we have to be able to translate our needs in such a way that the rest of the Jewish community can share them.

AGUS: I often ask myself whether there is something more fundamental that we are not courageous enough to ask ourselves



Some of the 500 women who participated in the

that will somehow imply a contradiction between our community or our religion and ourselves, and therefore we are terrified about asking it. Or will the next step be a rupture, not an incremental change but a major change in kind, and frightening. That is certainly true in family questions, sexuality questions, religious questions, theological questions. For example, the God-language issue terrifies me.

HYMAN: We haven't done a great deal within the Jewish community on the theological issues that feminism raises in terms of concept of God. This is an area where the impact of feminism would make people think differently.

The Reform movement has really taken significant strides in that direction by saying that these issues are important, that one has to look at language in textbooks, and at the language of prayer. When I spoke in my course on Feminism and Judaism at the [Reform] Hebrew Union College and I talked about whether there were any boundaries in feminist discussion, I said I thought the issue of bringing the Goddess into Judaism was beyond the pale. Not for everyone around the table!

At what point does Judaism cease being Judaism? We are always treading that line—are we going to do something that will cut us off from our people? I think that is the source of the terror.

LILITH: Does that also apply to communal matters?

HYMAN: In the early years of Ezrat Nashim, we debated whether we should ask

onal Jewish Women's Conference, held Feb. 1973.

women to withhold their contributions to Jewish institutions, to put them in escrow or to announce publicly that they were not going to make contributions because they were not granted equality within these institutions. One of our members did do that in a Conservative synagogue and was almost run off the stage by the rabbi. I feel torn because of my commitment to particular Jewish institutions. I'm not sure that I would want to turn to women and say, "Don't give to these institutions until the Messiah comes and they grant equality to women."

LILITH: You spoke of articulating Jewish feminist goals and having the community share them. To what extent is this happening?

HYMAN: The feminist issues that we have raised are either seen as incidental or potentially dangerous for Jewish survival. They have never been seen as positively linked with Jewish survival, which I think they are. Even when I think of my own Conservative movement, the concern about the ordination of women as rabbis has been expressed primarily in terms of fear of splitting the movement. I never hear people say that we are bleeding in this movement because of the loss of talented women and that there will be disaffection in the movement not only by those women who want to be rabbis but by other people within the movement.

AGUS: What is going on in the 1980's in the Jewish community is that the specter of Jewish power has no substance behind it. It's only a ghost, and it operates as if it still exists. More so now than at any other time in the last quarter-century, the Jewish community cannot identify priorities, cannot come up with an agenda. You can't find anything now that motivates Jews, not Soviet Jewry, not Israel. At the recent conference of NCJRAC, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, you could not find (a) a single strong agenda item, or (b) a single strong figure from anywhere in the world who would draw people to a conference. The same happened in November 1982 at the GA, the General Assembly of the Federation people. The energy level was so low you had to be propped up to find yourself seated.

HYMAN: Federation has always been one secular form of affiliation for Jews, but the Federation world has been significantly closed to women. You can't talk about real possibilities for women at this point within the leadership of the Federation.

AGUS: I don't think that it's true. Women in Federation, probably more than almost any other organization I can think of, play central roles in decision-making, both officially and unofficially. Some of them wield money, several of the large committee heads are women, some of the people who are taken seriously in halls of power are the heads of the Women's Campaign. So I think on every level in the Federation world this blanket condemnation is sort of outdated.

LILITH: But are the Federations committed in any way to dealing with feminist demands?

HYMAN: I spoke recently at a conference on "Jewish Women Who Work," sponsored by the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. Aside from some Federation men who were asked to speak at one session, no man—none of the male leadership of the Federation—was present during the entire proceeding. Important issues of concern to an entire community were raised and only women were listening.

LILITH: This is seen as a "women's issue" just like day care is, and, for that matter, ordination....

HYMAN: My lectures on Feminism and Judaism at the HUC were open to all rabbinical students as an elective. When I arrived, I discovered that the class was entirely female. Now women do make up between 30 and 40 percent of the rabbinical students, but I was struck by the failure of male rabbinical students to think that this was an issue that might be of some concern to them.

I think also of some egalitarian communities that I have been a part of where women read the Torah and are called up to the Torah and can lead services. Yet on the issues of adding the names of the Matriarchs whenever you mention the Patriarchs, when some women lead the service they do it, but I've never heard a man do it.

AGUS: I don't really get a sense that we have accomplished a great deal even in the relatively tolerant communities. I think of a recent Havurah Institute, where the issue was pluralism *vs.* tolerance, and "tolerance" meant that we must also tolerate discrimination against women. There was a conflict between feminist egalitarian concepts and the feeling that they have to allow all Jews within the Havurah movement to express themselves. And if some Jews feel they can only express themselves religiously in services where women are not counted, that's supposed to be O.K.

For the feminists at the Havurah Institute, it wasn't O.K. We want to feel that we are part of a broader community that says equality for women is so fundamental that if you don't accept it you don't belong in our community. In the same way I would feel that I don't want to be in a community with anti-Semites. I feel just as uncomfortable with anti-feminists as I feel with anti-Semites. I find that a lot of Jewish men don't recognize that in any way, they think it's amusing to *joke* about women's equality with a feminist.

HYMAN: At meetings of [an "alternative" Jewish institution] I feel like I am an anthropologist watching a foreign tribe, with the "counter-culture" males who think they have different values from their elders. After an argument about including more women on the board, one of the men said to me, thinking it amusing, "You know, I'm just an old male chauvinist sweetie-pie." The next day, he came up to me and said, "If anyone can convince me not to be a sexist, Paula, it will be you." That was a compliment, right? I said, "How would you like it if someone came up to you and said: "If anyone can convince me not to be an anti-Semite, it will be you '?" He didn't know what I was talking about.

I think there is a very strong emotional resistance to some of the changes we are suggesting. The passion of those who oppose feminist demands is very, very deep-seated and powerful.

LILITH: Isn't it a question of power—no powerful group gives up power easily...?

HYMAN: Unless we create communities only of women, if we choose to work with the rest of humankind then we face that dilemma. We are for the most part without power in comparison to men. I know that

"If the subordination of women is at the core of Judaism, then Judaism doesn't deserve to survive."

there are men without power too. But *as a group* we are without power. Then we face the dilemma of how do we achieve the sharing of power. What is it that persuades people with power that they cannot hang onto it or that it is not good for them to do so, that it should be shared, broadened? Sometimes it happens through revolution, but often it happens without revolution.

Ten years ago, Judith Hauptman (teacher of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary) and I wrote a letter to Gerson Cohen, JTS Chancellor, on the issue of ordaining women as rabbis. One of the arguments we made was that the leadership has to *lead*, and that we couldn't wait for there to be an absolute consensus that women should be rabbis. The leadership within a community can articulate a moral position which is not yet held by the majority, particularly on an issue like this, where you have the weight of tradition and a lot of psychological opposition to any kind of change.

AGUS: Because of the crisis in the community that I spoke of earlier, there is no perceptible leadership suppressing women right now. To some extent, the leadership, such as it is, does carry on the tradition of sex-role divisions, with the old-boys' network and the system still operating in much the same way as always. But there is no potent force now suppressing us, and this is a very ripe time to take action, to move away from the dead end we've hit.

We haven't achieved a lot of our aims partly because of our tactics and partly out of a lack of clarity of goals. If we rethink the last ten years this was not a revolution at all. I think it was pockets of resistance that we have formed. I think we did what we did as a kind of guerrilla resistance force.

HYMAN: We are a transitional generation, and I imagine that the next generation will be able to do better than we.

Certain things that are very new for us will not be new for our children. Every time I have an *aliyah*, I remember when I didn't have one. I remember the first time that I had an *aliyah*, and I remember being part of the community which did not grant women *aliyot*. My children have always had the experience of seeing women having *aliyot*. This should have the same emotional feel and legitimacy for them as anything else in the Jewish tradition.

On the other hand, just recently my six-year-old was saying that there were certain things that boys could be that girls couldn't be. I asked, "Like what?" And she said, "Like a daddy." I said, "Wonderful answer; anything else?" She said, "A rabbi." I said: "Wrong." I mentioned certain people she has met who are in fact women rabbinical students.

But it's clear to me that there have to be not just role models but a new social reality out there, so that every Jewish child will have met a woman rabbi; so that when asked about the two or three things that only men can be, "rabbi" won't be the second thing that pops into the consciousness of the child who's getting an egalitarian Jewish education and who *davens* in egalitarian synagogues and *havurot*. I go out of my way not to lead my daughters into places where women are subordinated.

I really do believe that the feminist revolution is a permanent revolution and not a fad of the decade that will disappear. One of the reasons that I am less concerned about the permanence of feminism is that the reality of men's and women's lives has changed significantly in the past 20 years, partly out of economic necessity when half —close to half—of all mothers of preschool children are in the labor force. That creates a profound social reality that in some way has to be met.

LILITH: What should we be concentrating on doing? What is the great challenge to come?

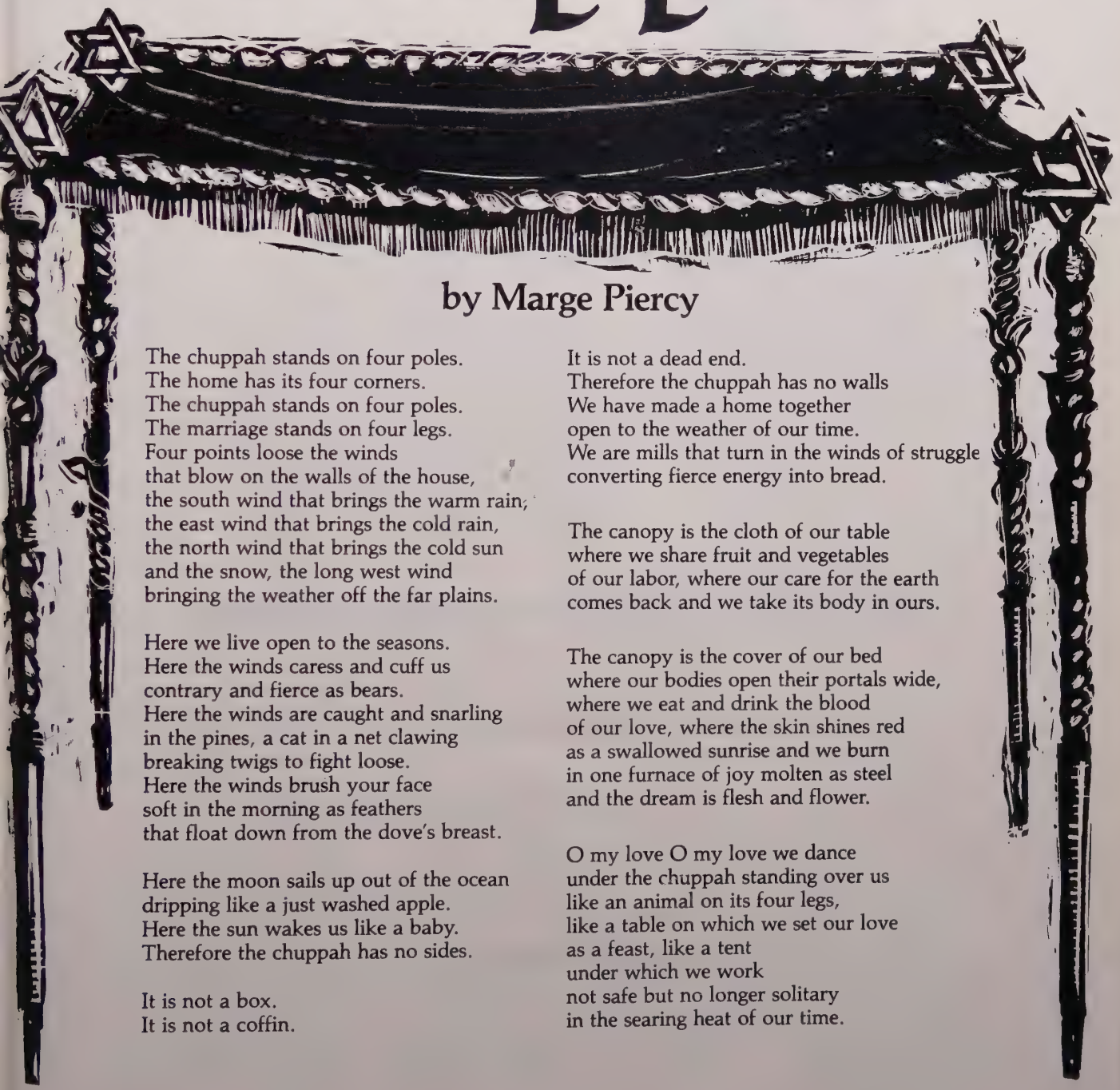
HYMAN: I think that we have to be willing to bring our message continually to the Jewish community: that is, not only to issue a list of demands, but to point out the negative impact on the Jewish community of doing nothing and of the loss of women to that community.

We feminists have not been completely successful in communicating that this is a fundamental and basic *moral* issue. If the subordination of women is at the core of Judaism, then Judaism doesn't deserve to survive. As a feminist, I am not willing to accept my subordination and the subordination of my daughters and my sisters as the price for the survival of Jewish tradition.

We are, in a sense, calling Judaism morally to account—Judaism is on trial in some ways for us. It must be able to contend with this moral issue—and resolve it.

Arlene Agus talks with Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg after he spoke at the eventful 1973 National Jewish Women's Conference.

The Chuppah



by Marge Piercy

The chuppah stands on four poles.
The home has its four corners.
The chuppah stands on four poles.
The marriage stands on four legs.
Four points loose the winds
that blow on the walls of the house,
the south wind that brings the warm rain,
the east wind that brings the cold rain,
the north wind that brings the cold sun
and the snow, the long west wind
bringing the weather off the far plains.

Here we live open to the seasons.
Here the winds caress and cuff us
contrary and fierce as bears.
Here the winds are caught and snarling
in the pines, a cat in a net clawing
breaking twigs to fight loose.
Here the winds brush your face
soft in the morning as feathers
that float down from the dove's breast.

Here the moon sails up out of the ocean
dripping like a just washed apple.
Here the sun wakes us like a baby.
Therefore the chuppah has no sides.

It is not a box.
It is not a coffin.
It is not a dead end.
Therefore the chuppah has no walls
We have made a home together
open to the weather of our time.
We are mills that turn in the winds of struggle
converting fierce energy into bread.

The canopy is the cloth of our table
where we share fruit and vegetables
of our labor, where our care for the earth
comes back and we take its body in ours.

The canopy is the cover of our bed
where our bodies open their portals wide,
where we eat and drink the blood
of our love, where the skin shines red
as a swallowed sunrise and we burn
in one furnace of joy molten as steel
and the dream is flesh and flower.

O my love O my love we dance
under the chuppah standing over us
like an animal on its four legs,
like a table on which we set our love
as a feast, like a tent
under which we work
not safe but no longer solitary
in the searing heat of our time.

Illustration by Paula Goodman

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RAISING KIDS IN A MIXED

Can kids be raised in a mixed marriage as proud and conscious Jews?

Parents of inter-marrying offspring, columnist Helen Latner tells us, fear it cannot be done and that the kids will be "lost" —to them and to the Jewish people.

But the Jewish spouse *can* raise her/his child(ren) to be Jewishly identified, as these five success stories demonstrate.

These first-person accounts fill an important gap on the current scene of dire prophecies and gloom by telling *how* it can be done—and substantially illustrate Latner's advice to the grandparents to "be there" for the mixed couple and for their grandchildren.

EWISH MARRIAGE

Sharon Lieberman

Sharon Lieberman is a 40-year-old teacher, writer and activist for women's health issues now living in New York City. She and her husband, Dale Good, have one son and are expecting another child shortly.

It is Friday evening, Erev Rosh Hashana, 1982. The three of us walk the eight blocks home from our synagogue after our first Friday evening service as a family. Dale, my husband, leans over the yarmulked head of our 3½-year-old son, Aaron, and hisses in mock horror, "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't know, I really didn't," I apologized.

(Tonight, as my husband entered the main sanctuary, he had just pulled his *tallit* (prayer shawl) out of its bag when the *shammas* (sexton) bustled over, and kindly pointed out that the *tallit* was not needed. I was unaware that the *tallit* is not worn on Friday evenings, except on Yom Kippur.)

Dale's embarrassment had implications beyond the minor gaffe: How can he raise a Jewish child when even his Jewish wife is ignorant of ritual, especially that applying to males? We laugh together, the clumsy leading the awkward. I wonder aloud what *tallit* lore is buried in our many do-it-yourself Judaism books.

If our attempt to raise a Jewish child is self-conscious, it is because my Jewish identity was acquired unconsciously. It was absorbed through the heart and spirit; I don't have a book of rules. I did attend a Conservative synagogue and I was even confirmed. My mother and father were, and still are, active leaders in their suburban Jewish community. We celebrated Shabbat, and observed major Jewish holidays, but we were not a religious family; ritual, law, and liturgy did not dominate our observances. It was the specialness of those times, the smell of food cooking, the buzz of cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents around the table that formed my tradition of a Jewish family in a Jewish home. We are also second and third generation Midwesterners, and as children my brother and I hung Christmas stockings and awaited Santa Claus.

My husband was reared in exurbia in what he terms an "areligious" home. His memories are of Christmas and Easter with no religious context at all. His much older sister married a Jew. Dale matured alongside his brother-in-law's large, exuberant extended family and his sister's Jewish children, learning, as he puts it, bagels-and-lox Judaism--that is, some of the superficialities of the culture but little of its moral and ethical foundations.

We are both from the Midwest, from cities a mere 60 miles apart; we first met in New York City. Both families were delighted when we married, in our mid-30's, to start a family. He converted enthusiastically, though his conversion was not rigorous. Conversion or no, there was never a doubt that I would raise a Jewish child, with or without the father's active support. A Jewish home and Judaic ethics were all that I knew. And, in truth, I wanted my future children to be welcomed into my family.

Aaron's birth a year and a half later signaled the start of the serious work of creating a Jewish home. We got off to a good start. Dale arranged for a *mohel*, my parents and their rabbi came to town laden with boxes of homemade baked goods, and we made a *bris* (circumcision ceremony). It was, in effect, an announcement to our gathered friends that from now on, we were—officially—a Jewish family.

We immediately did as parents what we never did as a couple: We began celebrating Shabbat and we joined a liberal Conservative synagogue. We prepare Aaron and ourselves for each Jewish observance with stacks of books. Dale has begun teaching Aaron Hebrew letters and words. In fact, Dale is teaching himself Hebrew from a series of programmed texts and now knows more about Jewish law and liturgy than I do. His studies excite his intellect, and appeal to his scholarly mind. One might think that he displays the zeal of a convert. Yet as his enthusiasm begins to resemble sober commitment, I sometimes balk. I am afraid of being left behind.

We face that together—just how Jewish is our child going to be? I have come to understand my Jewishness as a cultural and ethnic identification that is often transmitted in intangible ways. Dale cannot bring that to his parenting because he never experienced it. But he is finding his own way through study. So now I wonder

if, ironically, I will transmit the smaller part of my son's Jewish identity, the part he may come to regard as less valuable than his father's contribution. I would have to give up a great deal of worthwhile secular activity to keep up with Dale's interest in teaching our son the nuts and bolts of Judaism.

Dale and I agree on most aspects of Aaron's Jewish education, however. Aaron will go to Hebrew school, he will celebrate Bar Mitzvah. Dale is adamant that we remain in a city where a large Jewish community and liberal attitudes can bolster his efforts to parent a Jewish child, and where he and Aaron can more easily be accepted as Jews.

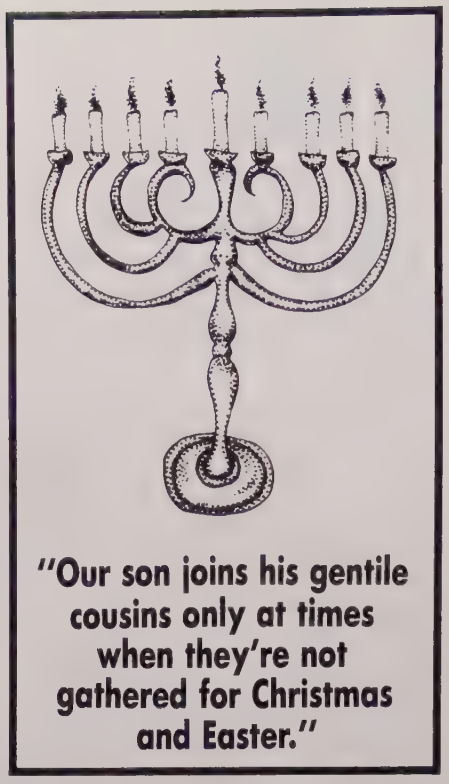
We make frequent visits to my family despite the geographical distance. It is Dale's decision that his son join his gentile cousins only at times when they are not gathered for Christmas and Easter. He himself ceased to enjoy these holidays after the age of twelve, and he believes that Aaron would be confused by the differences between our celebrations and theirs. I disagree. I think Aaron should know, and eventually experience, the occasions that are meaningful to his father's family. But I understand Dale's reasons, he is in the process of establishing his own relationship with Judaism and wants his son to follow us.

I, too, have behaved as if I must defend our son's introduction to Judaism against the seduction of . . . what? Christianity? gentile genes? I don't know, it's unreasonable of course and my early heavy-handedness with him —taking every opportunity to remind him of his Jewishness—is abating. But when we recently viewed my old family films showing several Christmas stocking scenes, I felt uneasy; I was allowed what Dale and I deny him. Will he think we are hypocrites?

I have to confess that there are moments when I am overwhelmed with the insight into how much easier and more natural it would be to raise a Jewish child with a Jewish man. What is Shabbat, after all, if not a sharing between the generations, and the retelling of a common history? Dale and I must create some new traditions that will bind the three of us to my history and Dale's.

And what does our child make of all this? He loves Shabbat, the flickering candles as the three of us recite the *bracha* (blessing) in unison, the songs from my childhood, and the atmosphere of a special family night when we're all home for dinner. He looks forward to Chanukah (which we are careful to celebrate very modestly), Sukkot, Simchat Torah, and Purim. When the competition for his attention in the secular world becomes cacophonous (as for example around Christmas and Easter) he sometimes remarks, "We're Jewish, right?" And last year, when not quite three, he would sometimes explain to the presumptuous that "We don't celebrate Christmas, we're Jewish." He questions with the thoughtfulness of any young child involved in the perplexing task of sorting out family ties, gender, and racial identity. He recently took a long, hard look at the Black man who operates the elevator in our apartment building and whispered to me, "Bennie's not Jewish, is he?" Well, of course, Bennie *could* be, and we reminded Aaron that there are Black members of our synagogue, and all over the world.

As he gets older there will be those who will challenge his right to call himself a Jew; he has heard, "but you don't look Jewish" from Jews, an ironical remark since many people are surprised to learn that Dale was not born or raised Jewish. We hope that Aaron will be a conscious, deliberate Jew *because* of his parents' intermarriage.



"Our son joins his gentile cousins only at times when they're not gathered for Christmas and Easter."

Zahava Jacobson

Zahava Jacobson (pseudonym), 43, lives with her actor husband and two sons in Manhattan. Born in New York City, she lived in Israel as a teenager, returning to the U.S. at 19. She is currently doing graduate work in arts administration.

I have two sons. One has just celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in New York and Israel; the second is eight-and-a-half.

My husband's paternal grandfather was a Jew. His father was raised as a Jew until he was five, when the grandfather died and the Jewish relatives rejected his non-Jewish widow. My husband was raised in New England as a "soft-shell Baptist."

At the time we met, I was struck by his interest in his Jewish roots and his desire to know more about Jews and Judaism. But he wasn't sure he wanted his children to be brought up as Jews. This was a bone of contention between us.

After many discussions on the subject, he read *Treblinka*. Its description of Jewish suffering and losses had a powerful impact on him. He told me, "I don't want to take away more people from the Jewish people by having my children born of a Jewish woman but not raised as Jews. I want my children to be part of the chain of Jewish history."

We are members of a Reform temple, and a few years ago we were members of a Conservative synagogue. But we don't really have a Jewish community. Yet there are two things I have banked on in raising my children Jewish. The first is Israel. My family lives there, and I grew up there. We have been there many times as a family and my older son has also been there on his own. So there is a definite relationship to that country for all four of us. For my children, the community is Israel—the connection to the Land.

The second thing is that somewhere along the line, I acquired a love of Judaism. I don't have as much knowledge as I would like, but I have a love of it and I think I impart that to the children. Being married to a non-Jew has forced me constantly to question and evaluate what aspects of Judaism are important to me and how to transmit them to the children in a meaningful way.

At some point—I don't remember exactly when—we started lighting the candles every Friday night. We say the blessings on the wine and on the *challah*. One summer, when, due to other plans, we skipped a few Friday nights, my younger son complained, "We have a family tradition, and we have to do it."

We hold seders at home and have a Rosh Hashanah dinner. A few years ago, I started holding a Tu B'Shvat [New Year for the Trees] "seder" at home, using four kinds of fruit juice. On Purim, we usually attend a synagogue service. On Chanukah, we light candles and invite neighbors to play dreidel and eat potato pancakes with us.

My husband, who did not convert to Judaism, joins us at the temple on occasion. He encourages the children's sense of Jewish identification. But when he initially agreed to their being raised as Jews, he did not anticipate all the nuances of what being a Jew means. Occasionally, when the children and I get very engrossed in organized religious expression, he fears they will become strangers to him. But these feelings are fleeting and temporary, and overall, I know he appreciates the beauty of the Jewish celebrations and heritage.

I didn't want to have a Christmas tree in the house, but early on in our marriage, my husband said he didn't want to give that up—the tree reminded him of pleasant experiences. I understood that for him to give up the Christmas tree would be as painful as for me to give up having a Passover seder. So I agreed to the tree, which led to the problem of how to prevent Chanukah from becoming a "poor man's Christmas." I have tried to resolve this by keeping Christmas and Chanukah as two completely different holidays. Christmas is the one day a year the kids get indulged with more gifts than they can handle. We approach Chanukah more like in Israel—we exchange token gifts—Chanukah *gelt*—and read stories and invite friends over.

When my older son was in the second grade, we enrolled him in a Hebrew school. It was held once a week, which was minimal, so we supplemented it with private Hebrew lessons with a small group. His Hebrew and Jewish education since then have been sporadic; however, this past year he has gone to religious school at the temple to which we belong, and received private tutoring from a woman cantor for his Bar Mitzvah.

He became increasingly involved with his Jewish identity through his Bar Mitzvah studies. For example, he has put up a *mezuzah* on the entrance to this bedroom and kisses it each time he goes in and out, and lays *tefillin* periodically. He plans to continue his Hebrew and Jewish studies, and to return to Israel for his sophomore year of high school.

When my younger son was in the second grade, he went to a Yiddish *schule* organized by parents in our building. When the *schule* was disbanded after one year, we enrolled him at the religious school of our temple.

The kids feel they are Jewish and also that they are very much involved with the larger society. They don't feel isolated; they are comfortable in Israel, comfortable with Jews and comfortable with non-Jews.

The older boy is quite an activist. He has a sense of responsibility toward the larger social ills of the world. To me that is a major part of what Judaism means, and I'm very proud of his involvement.

William Bly

William Bly is a 34-year-old controller for a major U.S. corporation. He was raised in the Bronx, New York, and now lives with his wife, Susan Brede, and two daughters in Jackson, Mississippi.

In 1979, my wife and I moved to Jackson, Mississippi. We were the proud parents of a 20-month-old daughter. I was looking forward to increased job responsibilities with a company I'd been with for six years; Susan was looking for opportunities to continue her career as a librarian, and for a good place to raise children.

In the six years we had lived in Connecticut, we had avoided any contact with religious institutions. We had enough family and friends to keep our social life busy since I had grown up in New York, and Sarah was too young to be asking questions about religion.

My own religious background was very limited. I attended the Workmen's Circle's *schule* for five years and got an education in Jewish

culture. I also learned to read and write Yiddish. My parents did not belong to a synagogue, and the only time I attended services was at friends' Bar Mitzvahs. I did not have a Bar Mitzvah myself, because I felt the religious significance of my friends' Bar Mitzvahs was far overshadowed by the parties that followed.

At one point in my life, during my four-month army reserve training, I did become more involved in Judaism. I was stationed in Fort Knox, Kentucky and would attend Friday night, Saturday and Sunday services. The Sunday service was followed by a day at the Louisville Jewish Community Center. The Hadassah ladies served us bagels, lox and scrambled eggs, and then we spent the rest of the day reading or playing sports. The main reason I attended the services was to get out of Saturday training and to get some decent food. The rest of the company was restricted to the barracks for the first six weeks of training.

My wife Susan was brought up by religious Catholic parents in Dubuque, Iowa. She had attended parochial schools through high school, but turned away from Catholicism during her college years. When we met in graduate school, she had no religious identification. Since Susan had no religion, and I felt a cultural attachment to Judaism, we decided to raise the children as Jews. We apparently discussed this before we were married. I have no memory of the conversation and was pleasantly surprised when, after Sarah was born, Sue reminded me that she had agreed to raise the children as Jews.

We were not married in a Jewish ceremony, nor did Susan convert prior to our marriage. A personal friend, a woman who is a Presbyterian minister, performed an essentially nondenominational ceremony.

When we moved to Jackson, we joined the temple there immediately, since the churches and temples are the main centers of social activity in

the community. The Jackson Jewish community is composed of about 250 families; about 90 percent belong to the Reform temple. Jews make up less than one percent of the Jackson population, and the religious fervor of a large segment of the Christian community ensures that Jewish children will learn about Christianity through their contacts with other children.

The Jackson Jewish community has been very welcoming to us and has accepted Susan as one of their own. Over the last three years, both of us have grown closer to Judaism and have developed a greater concern and appreciation for Jewish issues and religion.

Sarah attended the temple nursery school, which is the only nonsectarian one in town, and started Sunday school last year at the age of four. Sarah already perplexes us with religious questions like, "Where does God live?" I think Sarah perceives her mother as also being Jewish, although she recognizes that her grandparents are not.

When our second daughter was born, we had a traditional Reform Jewish naming ceremony for her at home, something our first daughter had not had in Connecticut.

Our social involvement with the Jewish community has exposed us to a world that we had ignored in Connecticut. Susan is active in the Sisterhood and in Hadassah. I have been active in B'nai Brith and am treasurer of the Jackson Jewish Welfare Fund. I usually attend Friday evening services, and do not work on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. We light Chanukah candles and give the children presents. We also enjoy a seder, usually with an adopted family in Mississippi. We do not celebrate Christian holidays.

As our familiarity with Judaism deepened, Susan began thinking of conversion. We were part of an encounter group for mixed-marriage couples which our rabbi organized. We discussed various facets of Judaism, how to celebrate holidays, how to raise children and how to handle parents. Susan has done extensive reading about Judaism, and finally converted this past summer.

Our daughters did not convert, as I consider this a legal requirement to satisfy Orthodox law that is not necessary in Reform Judaism. We have not contemplated a Jewish wedding ceremony. I didn't perceive any basic conflict in raising the children as Jewish, either before Susan's conversion or afterward. The kids interact well with their non-Jewish relatives, and I believe Susan's folks are happy to see them being raised in some religion rather than as atheists.

"It is wrong to tell children that Judaism and Christianity can be incorporated."

Eileen Berry-Harahan

Eileen Berry-Harahan, 39, lives in Reston, Virginia, where she works for an architectural and building firm in Reston as their "Jane Of All Trades."

I have a son Alec (age 17) and a daughter Rachel (age 15). My first husband, their father, died ten years ago. He had converted to Judaism before our marriage, having already considered conversion for some time. My present husband, Sam, has two sons from a prior marriage and comes from a Presbyterian-Catholic, Southern background ... a far cry from my New York, Orthodox-Conservative upbringing.

My husband and I consider ourselves more spiritual than religious. Sam never felt a strong bond to any particular church and I spent many years uncertain about my own Jewish identity within the traditional setting of most Jewish communities. We knew though, at the time of our marriage, that I would continue to raise my children as Jews. The ties were still there, and the children were taught many traditions through our family celebra tions.

A turning point for all of us wa joining a small alternative Jewish com munity called *Shoreshim* ("roots") her in Reston. The Hebrew school that th children attended (I use the ter Hebrew school for lack of a better de scription) stresses history, culture an tradition. The focus of the curriculur has been (and still is) to give the kids sense of being part of a Jewish commu nity and a knowledge of their heritage The community is totally lay-led an composed of about 35 families.

The openness, flexibility, and fe lowship of *Shoreshim* has permitte not only my children, but both myse and Sam to take active leadership role in a variety of activities. We have yea ly retreats, Sabbath services in ou homes, adult study groups as well a holiday celebrations. Sam has found structure within this community t support and express his values and als meet his spiritual needs without any in ner conflict. My personal identity as Jew is far stronger now and these pos tive feelings have helped Alec an Rachel develop a wonderful sense o pride about their own Jewish identity

Ted and Chris, my stepsons, joi in with many of the activities. Whil they do not consider themselves Jew ish, they will join us for Sabbath ser vices and Passover Seder when the are staying with us. Their participatio has been no different than my ow "joining-in" other friends' celebration regardless of their ethnic or religiou background.

A wonderful experience for us as family were Alec's and Rachel's Ba and Bat Mitzvahs. They were home grown celebrations for which we wrot the service, very different in that ou energies were not directed toward "catered affair." We put months o work into a service that was meaning ful to us which far out-weighed ou concerns over other logistics or sym bols. For example, my daughter chos to design a *tallis* (prayer shawl) fo herself, and since I knew all the chants was able to teach her the *haftorah*.

As easy as all this has been for m in some respects, this blending of tw backgrounds has its hurdles. The big gest for me was the first Christmas tre in our home. It was important for m husband and his children and couldn't deny them that pleasure, espe cially given the year-round support receive for our Jewish celebrations.

vas a very difficult time for me during Christmas the first year I was married o him, yet we have learned to rise bove any disapproving glances or omments.

I think my parents, having experinced with me the tragic death of my irst husband at a very young age, have hanged priorities in terms of what is mportant. How I celebrate Passover sn't important anymore, it is imporant that I want to celebrate it. Not aving a rabbi at my son's Bar Mitzvah vasn't important, my parents were just roud that my son wanted it. Our riorities have changed with our situaion and I suppose in many respects ve're a bit wiser and stronger.

After all is said and done, what nakes things really work for us is that he people we're close to have been upportive and accepting. Secondly, nd almost equally important, is that ve've had an opportunity to make hoices.

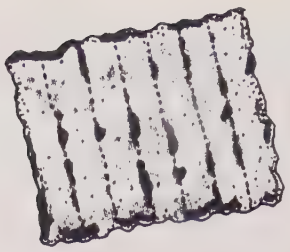
nge Lederer Gibel

nge Lederer Gibel is a writer and inergroup relations specialist. Her ssays have appeared in Harper's, udaism, The Christian Century, Response, Worldview, Israel Horions *and many other publications. She is on the staff of a major Amerian Jewish organization and is a progressive Zionist activist.*

In 1951, just before my 21st birthday, I married a Jamaican immigrant whose mother, a wonderful woman, was devoutly Catholic. My husband, however, rejected Catholicism, and for all intents and purposes, religion. Before I agreed to marry him, we discussed my very strong Jewish commitment, which included, of course, the Jewishness of any children we would have. Since Jewishness, then and now, means everything to me, and color has no relevance within Judaism, I felt no conflict; since religion, as such, was irrelevant to him and since he knew that I could be trusted to imbue our children, as well, with a strong sense of their Black heritage, he accepted this demand.

We have two children: a daughter who is a graduate student in African Studies and research assistant at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where she lives with her Israeli husband and their two boys; and a son, in New York, who works as a placement officer for a Wall Street personnel agency. Our daughter is biological, our son is adopted.

We were very poor when we were married, and I was a working mother by necessity, not choice. I had been quite ill in my pregnancy and didn't dare risk a second pregnancy while my job was so important. At that time, Louise Wise (adoption) Services decided to begin trying to



place interracial children who were halachically Jewish, *i.e.*, where the mother was Jewish and the father was not. This was my way of getting the second child we wanted and also doing what I considered an important *mitzvah*—saving a Jewish child, because every Jewish child who is not raised as a Jew is a loss to us, and in the age of the Holocaust we can't afford that loss.

My husband honored our agreement and our children were raised as Jews, with his full cooperation—attendance at all normal synagogue functions where parents are expected to show up during the course of Hebrew school, the Jewishness of our home, and, later, understanding their involvement in *Hashomer Hatzair*, a Socialist Zionist youth movement. At the same time, our children were fully exposed to and involved with the civil rights movement and in learning about their Black heritage.

Our children were raised to believe themselves to be—as indeed they are—*all* Jewish and *all* Black, and although the time came, as they

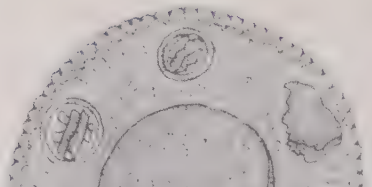
were growing up in the sixties, when both Jewish racism and Black anti-Semitism were realities to be dealt with, they believed that such manifestations were the result of outside exploitive forces who had much to gain from turning two oppressed groups against each other, not from an innate conflict between Blackness and Jewishness.

They were strengthened by the fact that, unlike some children of mixed marriages, they were never taught and never believed that they were half anything. I don't think interracial children should be raised as half-Black and half-white. Nor do I think it is fair to pretend that one can be half-Christian and half-Jewish. There is no such thing. It is wrong to tell children that somehow, Judaism *and* Christianity can be incorporated; it is wrong to pretend you can have a Christmas tree *and* a Chanukah menorah.

In many cases you don't know how committed you are to your religious roots, your cultural roots, until the children are born, until perhaps a parent dies and you are feeling all that guilt and all that need for continuity. Then I've seen people who loved each other very much tearing themselves and their children apart as one becomes more Jewish or more Christian. Then the child feels that, in being forced to choose one or the other,s/he is rejecting one or the other parent.

My husband felt, and I think still feels, very positively toward Jewish religious and cultural values, and very good about the commitment he was making. Nevertheless, in fairness to him I have to say that many people who enter a relationship where this kind of commitment is made do not fully understand what is involved. Even the Jewish partner who is asking for that commitment doesn't always understand what will come out of it.

When I married my husband, my consciousness and commitment as a Jew in the Prophetic tradition and as a Zionist were very strong and very complete—but I wasn't a mother. I had come to America from Vienna as a child of eight. We were refugees, experiencing anti-Semitism in the areas where we lived, and alienation from our Jewish neighbors who were trying to assimilate and become affluent and were not welcoming to us as refugees from Nazism.



"Some families regard the son's out-marriage as a greater tragedy than the daughter's."

I was an isolated child. I lived in books, and my Jewishness developed in relation to my parents and to the people we were forced to leave behind, to whom I felt a tremendous responsibility even as a child; and to my heroes, Biblical, Zionist and revolutionary heroes. I learned to be a Jew by myself, on my own since my parents couldn't afford to send me to Hebrew school; and being a girl, it didn't seem important enough for the rabbis to offer us a scholarship.

In my late teens, we moved to an area where I finally found Jews I had something in common with. Although they did not share my deep faith in our religious values, they were Socialist Zionists and people who tried to live the Prophetic tradition through a commitment to social action. Through them I became involved in *Habonim*, and considered *aliyah*, but the continuing illness of my sister, and my parents' need to have me near, made that seem impossible at the time. It is still my goal.

When my daughter went to a Jewish religious afternoon school, my isolated Judaism wasn't enough any more because she came home and began asking: "Couldn't we keep Shabbat? Couldn't we light candles?" At first my attitude was, well, I am a very good Jew. I am a better Jew than a lot of people who light candles and keep Shabbat and aren't decent human beings and, therefore, are not decent Jews. But she needed the ritual, and out of her need I did it. Once I did it for her, I found I was doing it for myself.

I must say that then there was a problem for my husband, because he hadn't counted on lighting candles on Friday night and maybe staying home with the family instead of going out as most American Jews do.

A second dimension of the problem might not exist for many American Jews, but it does where the Jewish partner is Israel-oriented and feels that Zionism is very much a part of being a Jew, as I do. I raised my children, with his full knowledge, to think of Israel as one of their options as I think all Jewish children should be raised. But when my daughter chose to live in Israel, that was a problem for my husband. To see his daughter—a beautiful young Black woman, graduate of a very good private school, with many doors open to her in America—going off to what some people consider a crazy little Middle Eastern country where there is a war every five years, was the limit. He wasn't going any further and that, of course, did create a conflict, and eventually caused us to separate.

Overall, I would say that we were very well received wherever we wanted to be in the Jewish community—and that was as true for my husband as it was for my children. Many Jews are against intermarriage because historically—and here I absolutely agree with them—Jews who have married out have been lost to the Jewish people and have often turned into enemies of the Jewish people. But once Jews realize that you are a Jew who is not only committed to being part of the Jewish people but also to bringing in your children to strengthen the Jewish people, they are very happy about it.

I think it is very difficult to raise children in a totally isolated environment where it's just you and them. I am sure it can be done, but I think it is much more difficult that way. My parents really helped to raise my children and we were very close to them.

Their lives were enriched by the fact that not only did we have among our good and close friends all kinds of people of various ethnic and racial groups and various professional backgrounds, but also a variety of Jews. They didn't have the feeling that there is only one way to be a good Jew or for that matter, only one way to be a good Black person, or a good human being. ✪

Helen Latner

Helen Latner writes an advice column that appears in The Jewish Week *in New York City and Washington, D.C., in the* Intermountain Jewish News *in Denver, and in* Jewish Chicago. *She appears regularly on WEVD in New York City as a guest on the Ruth Jacobs* Jewish Home Show. *She is also the author of* The Book of Modern Jewish Etiquette, *published by Schocken Books.*

Letters to the writer of an advice column range over a wide spectrum of human experience and relationships. A very high percentage of the letters I receive spring from the conflicts and emotional turbulence brought on by intermarriage.

Parental rage at the child's decision is the theme of these letters. Marrying a non-Jew seems to them to be the ultimate perfidy.

"How could they do this to us? My husband refuses to attend the wedding.... I am so upset by my son's approaching marriage that I don't sleep nights."

The storm of powerful feelings aroused by a proposed intermarriage often has little to do with the parents' religious observance *per se*, since feelings of ethnic loyalty, questions of filial obedience, perceptions of social class and even embarrassment before friends of family are also deeply involved.

There are sexist implications in the religious position that the religion of the mother determines the religion of the child. This outlook also causes some families to regard the out-marriage of a son as a greater tragedy than that of a daughter since, in the first case, they "lose" the succeeding generations.

Much as it may hurt when a child "marries out," it is not the end of the world. Life, for all the parties, *will* go on after the contemplated marriage, and the parents need to focus on the fact that they do not own their children, and have a life of their own to enjoy.

A true reconciliation becomes more and more deeply founded as the parents find their own lives, and as the couple themselves live through one crisis after another till they come to an internalized understanding of the problems, the sorrows and the joys of their own parents. The achievement of this rapprochement is not easy, not "instant," but when it comes, the rewards in harmony and *naches* are great.

A person old enough to marry is an adult, entitled to make her/his own mistakes and to find her/his own way in life. Understanding is needed, not alienation. The aim should be to salvage the future, not to take vengeful, masochistic steps that become self-fulfilling prophecies. The son or daughter you fear to lose will indeed become "lost" when you "cut" her/him off.

"There can be no compromise with any intermarriage," opines an irate reader. *"A person who marries out of the faith (particularly a man who marries a non-Jewish woman) cuts himself and his descendants off from the Jewish people and Judaism...."*

Such stern interdictions and harsh outlawing of the intermarried only alienate the very people we have brought up to be tolerant and democratic. We also drive them straight into the Christian world, which is waiting for them and their children with open arms.

We must hold onto the Jews we have and especially to their children. What do we gain if we drive them out because they have married out of the faith, and thus give up the chance to influence the education of their children? And is it so inconceivable that the non-Jewish partner might want to convert if he or she is warmly accepted?

"When I realized that my children wouldn't really be Jewish unless my non-Jewish wife agreed to bringing them up that way, I asked her if she would be willing to do this, and she promised she would...."

Once a child is on the way, the Jewish grandparents should not neglect to ask tactfully about a possible *bris* for the boy, or birth ceremony for girls, and should point out the necessity of conversion at birth for a child born of a non-Jewish mother.

"Although we are Reform, I arranged an Orthodox, halachic conversion for our two girls... in order to prevent a possible problem in their adulthood. We did not want our daughters, raised in a Jewish home, ever to have to face having their Jewishness challenged."

The Jewish grandparents in these families represent the treasure of the Jewish heritage to their grandchildren, an ethnic and religious source which they may lose if it is not explicitly expressed and handed down.

The grandparents' home should introduce Jewish content into the grandchildren's lives in a natural, non-aggressive way. They should share Jewish lore and legend, give Chanukah gifts, books and play things with Jewish content, have Purim parties, express an interest in the child's Jewish schooling and, above all, answer an older child's questions about religion honestly and without hidden agendas of anger or feelings of superiority.

A wise grandparent will never do these things behind the parents' backs, or in open contradiction to their wishes.

Although the older generation, trained, perhaps, in ghettoized thought patterns, feels uncomfortable with ecumenical ideas, it is possible that its more tolerant—and yes, less fearful—daughters and sons can sincerely undertake to live peaceably with two religions in one household, that a non-Jewish spouse can faithfully bring a child up as Jewish if that is the promise given at marriage, and that Jewish outreach programs may succeed in bringing harmony and unity to some of these homes.

Tsena-Rena

YIVO

"Go and see" or "seek enlightenment" is the title of the Yiddish-language Torah for women, with the portion of the week and folk tales. Tsena-Rena was the first resource that enabled women to educate themselves.

Groups and Projects

A group of sociologists and historians have begun a research project on Jewish immigrant women from Eastern Europe who came to this country prior to 1927, aged 13 or older.

While there exists a magnificent literature about this great migration, much of what has been written is seen through the eyes of the second and third generations, and most of it has been written by and about men.

The group would appreciate help in locating women who can tell them about their life experiences, joys, sorrows, struggles, dreams, and the reality of their daily lives, who were old enough when they came to know what they were leaving behind, and why it was necessary to leave. The group will visit the interviewees in their homes, or wherever it is convenient for them, and conduct taped interviews. All of the information will be absolutely confidential, in that a person's name will not be connected with her story.

Any woman who would like to be interviewed should call the project office at **(516) 246-8662 or (516) 246-8638 and ask for Lila Nadel or Brenda Hoke**, or write:

World of Our Mothers Research Project
Sociology Department
State University of New York
at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794

Also, mature women who understand Yiddish are needed for conducting taped interviews with Jewish immigrant women in the NYC area. $35/interview (approx. 6 hrs.) Contact:
World of Our Mothers, SUNY, (516) 246-8662, Gladys Rothbell.

Oranim, the kibbutz movement's school of education, is producing a kit of materials of all kinds for high school students and teachers on equal options for females and males in society, scheduled for publication in July, 1984. The project is the first of its kind in Israel, and its participants hope the material will become part of the Israeli school curriculum. They seek material on "equal options as related to Judaism", including on non-sexist learning activities in Jewish Studies; plus general material. For more information on the project:
Dr. Shoshanna Ben Tsvi-Mayer
Oranim
PO Kiryat Tivon, Israel

An umbrella group for women's prayer groups, study groups and minyans maintains listings of such groups across the continent. Sponsors of a conference last June in New York on "Women, Prayer and Tradition," the Task Force represents both Orthodox women who want to expand women's participation within the strictures of Jewish law, and those women who are seeking full equality for Jewish women in prayer and liturgy.
Task Force on Jewish Women
Box 1062
Teaneck NJ 07666

A new feminist speakers bureau, Batya Bauman Enterprises: Program/Lecture Services, has been launched and will concentrate on feminism and Judaism. The women who are represented are women who will carry messages reflecting not only feminist awareness, but also a commitment to Jewish survival.

Batya Bauman Enterprises
Program Lecture Services
P.O.B. 694,
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025
(212) 866-6422

The Feminist Theological Institute Inc. is an interdenominational organization for all feminists interested in theology and religion. For more information, write:
Judith Plaskow
Feminist Theological Institute
64-53 Bell Boulevard
Bayside, N.Y. 11364

Jewish Day Care

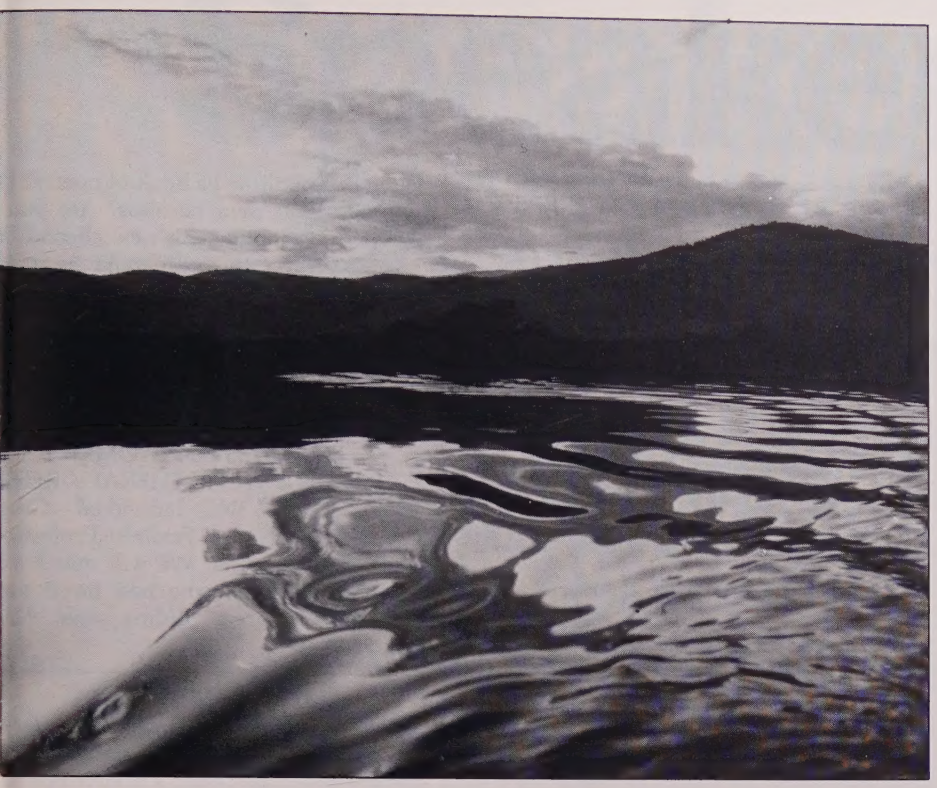
The Philadelphia chapter of the American Jewish Committee's subcommittee on the status of women has conducted a study on the need for, and problems associated with, Jewish day care programs. For copies write:
George M. Ross, President
Robert A. Fox, Chairman of the Board
Philadelphia Chapter, AJC
411 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA
(215) 564-2460

Stephen Wise Free Synagogue Day Care Center
30 W 68 St.
New York, NY 10023

Parenting Center
Family Day Care Network
92 Street Y
1395 Lexington Ave
New York, NY 10028

Yaldenu Jewish Day Care Center
Temple Ansche Chesed
West End Ave at 100 Street
New York, NY 10025

Day Care Center for Jewish Community Workers
c/o National Council of Jewish Women
New York Section
9 E. 69 St.
New York, NY 10021



"Hula Waterscape" photographed by Gail Rubin

Books and Publications

The Jewish Women's Studies Guide, compiled by Ellen Sue Levi Elwell and Edward Levenson, features fifteen Jewish women's syllabi and bibliographies, divided into three basic categories: "University Courses on Jewish Women," "Integrating Jewish Women into the University Curriculum," and "Adult and Continuing Education Courses." The Guide is available for $6.95.
Biblio Press
POB 22
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365

"Jewish Women: A Mini-Course for Jewish Schools," by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Ellen Sue Levi Elwell, is a 12-hour course designed for grades 7-12 and adults. It is available, in a package of 20 copies plus a leader's guide, for $30.00, from:
Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc.
3945 So. Oneida St.
Denver, CO. 80237

Gisi Fleischman and the Jewish Fight for Survival by Joan Campion tells the fascinating story of a Slovakian woman whose efforts helped save thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. Copies can be obtained at $11.95 each, from:
Dvorion Books
508 Fifth Ave.
Bethlehem, PA 18018

"Program Information Exchange: Innovative Services for the Elderly," published by the Council of Jewish Federations, contains descriptions of nine wide-ranging programs to help the elderly, including such topics as: living arrangements, dental care and emergency medical assistance. For more information, contact:
Joan Fuld, Planning Consultant
Council of Jewish Federations
575 Lexington Ave
New York, NY 10022

We are editing an anthology of work by Jewish feminists and proto-feminists (pro-women, even if the authors did/do not identify as feminists). We want this anthology to represent the true diversity and range of Jewish women, of all classes, cultures, racial and political backgrounds.
ANTHOLOGY
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A number of matted 8"x10" color prints from *Psalmist With a Camera,* a book of photographs by Gail Rubin are now available, singly or as a set. They are "Spoonbills", "Mustard Flowers," "Hula Waterscape" (reproduced above) and "Eucalyptus Treebark." Rubin is the American Jewish photographer killed in a terrorist attack in Israel in 1978. The photographs were originally exhibited, with their texts, at the Jewish Museum of New York. For more information contact:
Photographs by Gail Rubin
1016 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10028

Help for Battered Jewish Women

Shiloh Hotline
POB 6031
North Hollywood, CA 91603
(213) 784-6894

A kosher shelter serving the New York area is:
Transition Center
(212) 327-7660

SOVRI (Support for Orthodox Victims of Rape and Incest) can be reached through the:
Victims Services Agency
54 Nagle Street
New York, NY 10040
(212) 567-5008

While the Haifa Shelter for Battered Women has assisted hundreds of battered women in Israel, many battered women remain homeless. The Shelter has therefore established a Housing Fund. Please send earmarked contributions to:
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—compiled by Rachel Hallote

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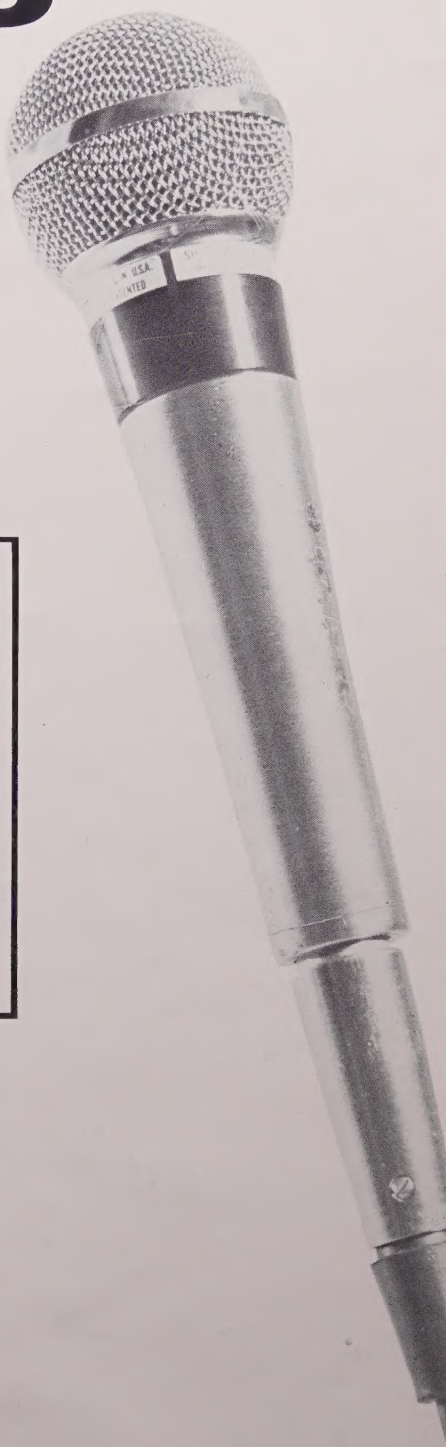

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